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MEDITATIONS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

BY

B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF ELY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

HON. CANON OF ELY

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN

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To

THE VERY REVEREND
HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D.
DEAN OF LICHFIELD
(SOMETIME PRINCIPAL OF ELY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE)
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION
OF THE KINDNESS OF MANY YEARS

P R E F A C E

THIS book of Meditations on the New Testament is published as a companion volume to the Meditations on the Old Testament which was issued some four years ago.

They are taken from the Second Lessons appointed in the Prayer-book to be read at the daily services throughout the year.

It is hoped that the book may be a means of helping people who attend the daily services, or who read the lessons at home, to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" some few points suggested by the Scriptures day by day. Certainly there would seem to be great need that in the midst of our busy lives we should do our best to get time to think each day over some verse or verses of the Bible, and so to use the Scriptures that they may be to us in some sense daily food for the soul.

A few suggestions in regard to systematic meditation are printed at the beginning of the book, in case they may be of use to some readers; but as life advances one becomes more and more convinced that the various "methods" of systematic meditation are like scaffolding-poles, which we learn after a time to do without, and which indeed never commend themselves to some minds.

PREFACE.

In any case the essential thing is to remember that the essence of meditation is to use the Bible devotionally as God's voice to the soul; or to pray according to its inspiration, and so meditation becomes mental prayer. It is, in fact, a kind of prolonged prayer in which we wait upon God while we try to use all the faculties which He has given us—whether of intellect, imagination, affections, or will—in reaching out after Him. A picture is presented to the imagination, the intellect ponders over it, the affections are moved towards God by it, and the will makes the whole exercise practical.

Few people find it easy to meditate; but those who have, with whatever success, persevered will always advise others to do the same; they will say, "Meditate, if not systematically, then unsystematically; if not kneeling, then in any posture in which you can best keep your attention; if not for half an hour, at least for fifteen or twenty minutes."

The writer desires to take this opportunity of thanking his cousin, Miss J. C. Randolph, for her kind help in compiling the index at the end of the volume.

B. W. R.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
ELY,

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1903.

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SUGGESTIONS AS TO SYSTEMATIC MEDITATION

THE PREPARATION.

(1) Place yourself on your knees, and make an earnest effort to remember the Presence of God, and an act of profound adoration:—

O my God, I am in Thy Presence; help me to realize it. Thou art All-Holy, I am full of guilt. I adore Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from the depths of my own nothingness and sinfulness. I come before Thee, desiring to love Thee with all the powers of my mind, and heart and will.

(2) Cast out from the soul every sinful inclination:—

Cast out of me, I pray Thee, everything that is not according to Thy Will, and make me wholly Thine. Keep me during these solemn moments from all assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil: that hearing Thy Voice, I may learn Thy Will, and learning Thy Will I may go forth and perform it unto the end.

(3) Make an effort of self-oblation that you may give yourself to God in mental prayer, and accept at His Hands dryness or spiritual fervour as He sees best:—

I give myself to Thee, O my God, in life and in death, and here especially in this meditation. Do with me what seemeth good in Thy sight; not my will but Thine be done; correct what Thou seest

amiss in me. Taceant omnes doctores; sileant universæ creaturæ in conspectu Tuo; Tu mihi loquere solus.

(4) Pray for the aid of God the Holy Ghost, that He may help you to pray and meditate aright.

Eternal Father, I pray Thee to give me the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit; that He may illuminate my understanding, enkindle my affections, invigorate my will, cleanse my memory, quicken and control my imagination—

VENI CREATOR.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy seven-fold gifts impart.

Thy blessed Unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home :
Where Thou art Guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of Both, to be but One.
That, through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song :

Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart,
be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and
my Redeemer.*

THE MEDITATION ITSELF.

(1) Read over the passage in the Bible (*use a Bible you can mark*).

(2) Take the First Prelude and try to picture the circumstances or the scene.

(3) Pray, in your own words, according to the suggestions made in the Second Prelude.

(4) Take the points and use your mind and conscience ; think over them, brood over them, and ask yourself from time to time such questions as, How does this affect me ? What bearing has it on my own life or practice ? What can I learn from it ? What would God teach me ? Fill your heart more and more with a desire to love God, to correspond with His purposes for you. Try and lift up your whole soul from the seen to the unseen, from earth to Heaven. Ask Him to take your heart off transitory and lower joys, and to fix it on Himself and things eternal.

(5) The affections and emotions are stirred for a practical purpose—in order to invigorate and brace the will. Make, then, some resolution arising out of the subject which you have considered. “I will strive against this or that wrong tendency.” “I will think more of this or that duty.”

THE THANKSGIVING.

O my God, I thank Thee for the help Thou hast given me in this meditation, and for the truths of which Thou hast spoken to me. Forgive all that has been amiss—my coldness and dryness and lack of love ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Anima Christi.

Our Father.

I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God : and will make mention of Thy righteousness only.

JANUARY 1.

The Circumcision of Christ.

READ ROM. ii. 17 TO END.

He is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord undergoing the rite of circumcision.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn rightly the lessons of this Festival: say the Collect for the day.

POINT I.—Circumcision may be taken to symbolize the need of purity of heart in its widest sense—the cutting off anything which draws the heart away from God. Let me think at the opening of a New Year what I ought to cut off. Is there anything of worldliness or selfishness in my life? Am I disinterested? Am I aiming at the glory of God?

POINT II.—Circumcision was in some respects the Jewish counterpart to Baptism. It was the sign of the covenant relationship between God and His people. But what a difference! Circumcision conferred no grace, whereas by Baptism I was made “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” Reflect to-day on these great privileges.

POINT III.—In being circumcised, our Lord complied with the requirement of the Jewish Law. He was “obedient unto the law for man.” Reflect upon this example of humility and docility. Am I seeking to hear God’s voice in the ordinances of the Church? Is there any precept of the Church to which I pay no attention?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn on this first day of the year detachment from wrong, and aim at a closer walk with God.

JANUARY 2.

Jesus the Saviour.

READ ST. MATT. i. 18 TO END.

Thou shalt call His Name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mystery of the Virgin-Birth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize Jesus as your Saviour more and more.

POINT I.—By the mystery of the Virgin-Birth the entail of original sin was cut off. Humanity gathered up in Christ makes a fresh start. Our Lord is the second Adam—the new Head of the human race. God unites human nature to Himself by taking Flesh in the womb of Mary. Thus He raises human nature to an unspeakable dignity.

POINT II.—God and man are thus made One in Christ. The two natures of Godhead and manhood are united in One Person—the Eternal Son, Who was ever in the Bosom of the Father and has become man that we might be made Divine. There is no estrangement now between us and God if we are in Christ. *I am the door.*

POINT III.—*He shall save His people from their sins.* Why? Because He is God. *The second Adam is the Lord from heaven.* It is God, the Eternal Son, Who was born of Mary. All the details of His life and death have an “infinite worth,” because He is God as well as man. He has the power to forgive and to heal.

“Be of sin the double cure,
Save from guilt and make me pure.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try to think to-day of your personal need of a Saviour. Is He cleansing you from sin?

JANUARY 3.

The Wise Men.

READ ST. MATT. ii.

There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Wise Men offering their gifts to the Infant Saviour.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may offer yourself, all that you are and all that you have, to our Lord.

POINT I.—Consider the means which the Wise Men made use of in finding their way to Christ. They were, in all likelihood, astronomers. It is possible that some tradition about Balaam's prophecy of the star that should rise out of Judah lingered among them; and they found Christ in diligently pursuing their ordinary calling. So will you.

POINT II.—Herod, on their arrival in Jerusalem, directs them to the chief priests, and they consult the Scriptures. So the Church and the Bible go hand-in-hand. Duty, the Church, and the Bible—we need to combine all three. So many are content to despise one or other of them. How is it with you?

POINT III.—They offer the gold of their lives, the incense of their prayers, and the myrrh of their sufferings. So with us these three need to be combined. Our work must be accompanied by prayer, and we must expect to have our full share of suffering. Without prayer and suffering how can we expect to have our life's work accepted?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to use more diligently the means at hand for approaching Christ.

The Preaching of St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. MATT. iii.

Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Forerunner preaching to the crowds who came to him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to bring fruits meet for repentance.

POINT I.—The solitary figure of St. John the Baptist in his austerity is a great illustration of the disciplined and detached life. So true a life attracted crowds to him from Jerusalem and all Judæa. He had one great message, viz. Repent. It is the great work of life for each. Let me ask myself, Is my life becoming more disciplined and detached ?

POINT II.—*Fruits meet for repentance.* The true test of repentance is amendment. Penitence is progressive ; we ought to be able to detect some movement in our lives indicating greater eagerness to get rid of our special sins. What sins do you most frequently have to acknowledge ? Are you amending ?

POINT III.—*Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.* This means for us, Avoid resting on any external privileges as if they were a ground for our being accepted. The being a Christian, living among Christians, is a privilege which brings with it enormous responsibilities. Beware of taking the world's standard as your own.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Long to live a penitent life, deepening in sorrow for sin.

The Temptation of our Lord.

READ ST. MATT. IV. TO V. 23.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord, after His Baptism, going into the wilderness to be tempted.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to resist your besetting sin.

POINT I.—Reflect, in the first place, that the narrative of our Lord's Temptation must have come from Himself. Next, that *He was led up of the Spirit*. It was a special trial undergone for our sakes and under the guidance, so far as His human nature is concerned, of the Holy Ghost. Learn that temptation is allowed by God and is an opportunity for acquiring virtues. The devil is really allowed to come and suggest evil to me!

POINT II.—*Command that these stones be made bread.* The first temptation is often addressed to our appetites. I must beware of this, and remember that the lower nature is never to have the initiative; it is to be ruled and guided by the mind, and the mind must be directed by the government of God. How is it with you?

POINT III.—The other two temptations—to presumption (*cast thyself down*), and to worldliness (*all these things will I give thee*)—are generally addressed to us in advancing or later life. Childlike dependence on God will save us from presumption, for we shall find our safety in doing our duty to His Glory. The conviction that God alone can satisfy the soul will keep us from the snares of worldliness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Face your besetting sin, and remember always to expect temptation. Be on your guard.

JANUARY 6.

The Baptism of our Lord.

READ ST. LUKE iii. 15-23.

Thou art My beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the descent of the Holy Spirit at our Lord's Baptism.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to take more pains over your prayers.

POINT I.—The Baptism of our Lord is appointed as a lesson for to-day, because it was so obviously a great manifestation of His Messiahship. He is declared to be the *Beloved Son* by a voice from heaven, and He is anointed to His office by God the Holy Ghost. The Father speaks, the Son is baptized, the Holy Ghost descends. "Go to Jordan," says St. Augustine, "and you will see the Trinity."

POINT II.—Notice that it was as He was praying that the Holy Ghost came down. He, the pattern Man, is our example in prayer. Consider your conduct in regard to prayer. Is it regular and reverent and sustained? Are you learning to be less distracted in prayer? Realize that it is only in the power of the Spirit that we can really pray. Ask for His help and guidance.

POINT III.—Think of the Humanity of our Lord thus formally anointed for the work of the Messiah. The true Man is guided by the Spirit of God; so by the Spirit He is anointed, by the Spirit He works miracles, by the Spirit He offers Himself without spot to God. How far is your life moulded and guided by the Spirit of God?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to bring your life more and more under the guidance of God the Holy Ghost.

JANUARY 7.

The Beatitudes.

READ ST. MATT. V. 1-13.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord seated among the crowd and preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to aspire more fervently to be a true Christian.

POINT I.—The first three Beatitudes deal with the underlying temper which should characterize a follower of Christ. Poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness—all these are opposed to the worldly, self-satisfied, pushing spirit which actuates other men. Let me examine my own heart, and ask myself whether I am striving after meekness and gentleness and all absence of self-importance or display.

POINT II.—The next four Beatitudes describe the way in which the Christian spirit will display itself in the world. There will be a real passion for righteousness, a tenderness of behaviour towards others, thorough disinterestedness of purpose (purity of heart), and a desire to see men live in harmony one with another. What does my conscience say?

POINT III.—The last Beatitude indicates the way in which the Christian character is met by the world. There is opposition and calumny, but this should lead the Christian to rejoice. If it is not often that we are called upon to suffer persecution, reflect whether it may not be because we are so unlike Christ. Am I growing in moral courage and, at the same time, in gentleness?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to place your life side by side with the Beatitudes.

The Law Re-published.

READ ST. MATT. V. 13-33.

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord expounding the Law.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy Law.”

POINT I.—Our Lord tells us that He did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. It is no new Law that He is putting forth in this Sermon. He is explaining the old Law; but He is explaining it in a new way. He shows how deeply the Decalogue, rightly understood, cuts down into heart and motive. We can never get beyond the Ten Commandments, for it is not merely the outward act of sin which they condemn, but the indulged thought of sin.

POINT II.—Our Lord illustrates this by a reference to the Sixth Commandment. It is not merely the outward act of murder which this condemns, but the angry or scornful word—*Raca, thou fool*—nay, even the indulgence in angry feelings without due and rightful cause. Let me examine my conscience with regard to disparaging thoughts or words about others, or with regard to the sin of anger and impatience.

POINT III.—Another illustration is afforded by the Seventh Commandment. The wilfully indulged thought of evil is itself sin. Two things have to be asked. Do I keep a careful guard over my eyes? Do I resist the beginnings of evil thoughts? Remember the solemn words of our Lord, *I say unto you.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more strict with yourself about the things which you allow yourself to think about.

The Christian Ideal.

READ ST. MATT. V. 33 TO END.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord mocked and ill-treated before Caiaphas and Herod.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of meekness, forgiveness, and charity.

POINT I.—Our Lord in these verses repeals the law of retaliation and substitutes the law of love—*Resist not evil*. How far have you advanced towards this ideal? How do you bear personal neglect or insult? Do men see in you an example of the Christlike spirit of meekness and gentleness? Think well how our Lord carried out in His Passion that to which He here exhorts His disciples.

POINT II.—*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.* Reflect how in all these matters we are apt to be guided by conventional opinion rather than by the Christian standard. Can you do anything in your own life to correct this? Do you ever nourish personal dislike or prejudice? Are you ready to do a good turn to any one who may have slighted or wronged you?

POINT III.—*Pray for them which despitefully use you.* Here is a clear duty. You cannot long cherish a feeling of ill-will towards any for whom you are praying. We can overcome feelings of estrangement or repulsion by praying for those who may excite such feelings in us. Do you do this?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be kind and loving to every one. Pray for a Christlike spirit.

The True Motive.

READ ST. MATT. VI. TO V. 19.

Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the widow casting into the treasury “all her living.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a right motive in all your religious actions.

POINT I.—Do not seek the praise of men in anything that you do ; do not use the praise of men as the motive which actuates you. This is what our Lord would teach us: He says that if we do “we have our reward ;” we have it here, but we lose our reward hereafter. God’s glory and the love of men for His sake are the true motives. He applies this principle to the three duties of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.

POINT II.—Almsgiving represents our duty towards our neighbour, prayer our duty towards God, and fasting our duty towards ourselves. With regard to prayer, our Lord teaches us that there must be secret private prayer. He is not condemning public worship, for He used to take part in it Himself, and He has a special promise for the two or three gathered together in His Name ; but He insists on the duty of private secret prayer. Do you ever make public worship an excuse for neglecting private prayer ?

POINT III.—Fasting is a duty which our Lord here takes for granted, *When ye fast.* He cannot be taken to condemn the outward observance of fast days approved by authority, but He insists on the necessity of a right motive and of secret self-denial. Is your fasting a reality ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more real in these three duties. Pray for a right motive.

JANUARY 11.

Trustfulness.

READ ST. MATT. vi. 19 TO END.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the care of Almighty God for the birds and the flowers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more childlike trust in God.

POINT I.—Our Lord warns us against a divided heart. The eye must be single, *i.e.* the motive must be pure. We cannot “make the best of both worlds” without disloyalty to Him. The sin of *laying up treasures on the earth* is an indication that the heart is resting on earthly things instead of on God. It betrays want of trustfulness and of single-hearted devotion to Him. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

POINT II.—*Therefore take no thought for your life.* “Look at the birds,” says our Lord, “look at the flowers.” God takes care of them, He clothes and feeds them; He will do the same for us if we diligently seek Him. Hence we are not to be *anxious, distracted*, about worldly needs—food, raiment, and the like. Are you learning to sit loosely to the things of time and sense?

POINT III.—*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* There is nothing unreal about our Lord’s teaching; He does not say that we do not need food and raiment. On the contrary, He says, *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* But, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God.* God must be the first Object of desire and thought.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Trustfulness; detachment; desire to seek God’s Will in everything.

JANUARY 12.

Reality in Religion.

READ ST. MATT. vii. 7 TO END.

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord ending the Sermon on the Mount with this solemn warning.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more thorough self-knowledge.

POINT I.—The Sermon on the Mount ends with some very solemn words of warning—*The strait gate—I never knew you—Great was the fall of it.* This should make us reflect on the stern side of the Gospel. There must be the Cross, which means that true religion is sometimes hard to flesh and blood. Am I getting too easy-going?

POINT II.—One of the great difficulties hinted at is the difficulty of thoroughly knowing one's self. That some who had, in our Lord's Name, “done many wonderful works,” should nevertheless hear such awful words as *I never knew you*, should make us fearful, and lead us to examine more carefully our methods, motives, and ambitions.

POINT III.—*Great was the fall of it.* Here is another warning. Profession without practice, knowledge without love. And yet the spiritual fabric must have been built up to some height. There was a fair show, but the foundations were rotten! You may know a good deal about religion without being religious! What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, Good Lord, deliver us.

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant.

READ ST. MATT. viii. TO v. 18.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the centurion beseeching our Lord to heal his sick slave.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater kindness and consideration towards others.

POINT I.—Think of the kindness of this soldier to his slave. He must have been a very kind-hearted man and a religious man. *He is worthy for whom thou shouldest do this; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*¹ He acted up to the light which he had, and so was fulfilled our Lord's promise, *To him that hath shall be given.* Are you kind-hearted and considerate to others? To servants? To the poor?

POINT II.—Our Lord draws special attention to the soldier's faith. His faith in our Lord's power to help him was derived from a consideration of what he saw in his own profession. The discipline of the Roman soldier—he was himself under authority, and he in his turn commanded others. A word was sufficient! *I say unto this man.* It could not be necessary that this great Teacher should come Himself.

POINT III.—*Many shall come from the east and from the west, etc.* Our Lord here warns us that those who having little light yet act up to that light, will be accepted at the last, while those who have been unfaithful to great privileges will be cast out. How about your use of privileges? They bring with them corresponding responsibilities!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn to-day from this heathen soldier more consideration to others, and more complete trust in God's power and love.

¹ St. Luke vii. 4, 5.

Following Christ.

READ ST. MATT. viii. 18 TO END.

Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord bidding this man to weigh well his words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to rise up to the vocation to which God may call you.

POINT I.—The first man dealt with in these verses was one who was impulsive, and who spoke without considering what his words really implied. *Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.* Our Lord always checks this kind of impulsiveness. He reminds him that *the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.* There is a danger of unreality in our prayers. Do you ever say to our Lord more than you mean?

POINT II.—Our Lord's words to this scribe really mean, “Count the cost; it is no light thing to talk of following Me. Do not use words at random. Think what you are saying.” It is easy to be carried away in moments of religious enthusiasm; but what God looks at is the will, not the emotions. Am I *willing*, with my whole soul, to follow Christ up to the point to which He is calling me?

POINT III.—To the other man our Lord vouchsafed a special call. He would not even let him go back and perform the duty of burying his father. There are such calls to complete devotion, but they do not come to very many. We should be very humble and mistrustful of ourselves. God will not lay upon us a greater burden than we can bear; but if He calls we must follow at all costs.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cultivate an attitude of readiness to respond to God's call.

JANUARY 15.

The Man Sick of the Palsy.

READ ST. MATT. ix. TO V. 18.

They brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the crowd round our Lord. Those who brought the man had¹ to uncover the roof and to let him down.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be of use in bringing others to our Lord.

POINT I.—There was great difficulty in getting this man to our Lord. The crowd was so great that *there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door*. The four men who carried him took great pains to bring the sick man. How often have you shrunk from pain and trouble, and only done a kindness when it has cost you very little?

POINT II.—*Jesus seeing their faith.* It is not, indeed, said that the sick man himself had not faith, nevertheless stress is laid on the faith of the men who brought him. See here a divine acceptance of the principle involved in having godparents who bring children to Christ. Consider your duty in this respect. Do you pray for your godchildren? Do you find out whether they are confirmed?

POINT III.—*Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.* This gift of absolution was not what the sick man or his friends expected! But our Lord gives more than he asked for! He comes to receive a lesser blessing, Jesus gives him a greater! He comes for the healing of the body, Jesus first heals his soul! Sin is the only real evil; other troubles may be blessings in disguise!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Draw near to Jesus yourself, and do what you can to bring others.

¹ St. Mark ii. 4.

The Woman with the Issue of Blood.

READ ST. MATT. ix. 18 TO END.

If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the poor woman pushing her way through the crowd and secretly touching our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater faith.

POINT I.—For twelve years she had been afflicted with this haemorrhage. She had spent all her money on physicians, but without any beneficial result. So God sometimes suffers us to be tested by some grievous trial for a long time, till we learn that the only remedy is to throw ourselves upon Him with more child-like simplicity and trust. Treat trials of all kinds as opportunities for getting nearer to our Lord. Do you do this? Or are you rebellious?

POINT II.—The multitude was thronging and pressing our Lord, but only this woman touched Him in faith. *Somebody hath touched Me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.* So learn the true office of faith. In the Holy Eucharist our Lord is there independently of our faith; but it is faith alone which makes that Presence beneficial to us. Faith alone can draw the virtue out of Him.

POINT III.—*Thy faith hath made thee whole.* What a power there is then in vivid and strong faith! It is the key which unlocks the treasures of Divine grace stored in the Sacraments. Have you this faith? Before Communion examine yourself. Have you “a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ”?¹ The Sacraments do not act mechanically.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—In troubles resolve to hold fast to our Lord in faith, hope, and charity.

¹ Church Catechism.

The Mission of the Twelve.

READ ST. MATT. X. TO V. 24.

These Twelve Jesus sent forth.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord sending forth the Twelve Apostles on their first mission—to the Jews only.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to correspond to the Divine guidance.

POINT I.—*Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* This was the first and, so to say, preliminary mission of the Twelve. God is always calling and guiding us step by step. By faithfulness to His early guidance we fit ourselves for His further calls, whether it be to different trials, more work, greater responsibility, terrible sorrow. We need, like the Apostles, to learn trustfulness. How are you corresponding now to God's guidance?

POINT II.—*Freely ye have received, freely give.* The Apostles had miraculous powers—to heal the sick, to cast out devils. But we all have gifts, and these are to be used not selfishly, but for the good of others. Are you laying out the gifts God has given you in the best way? For the good of the Church? For the well-being of those around you? For the alleviation of pain and sorrow?

POINT III.—*The workman is worthy of his meat.* Our Lord's own word for His messengers is *workman*. The law of work is the law of life. We are *worthy of our meat* only if we really work. The vast majority are obliged to work, but every one ought to work. Is your life a working life? Pray against indolence.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire and purpose to lay out your life and your gifts for the good of others. Struggle against selfish ease.

The Exclusive Claim of Christ.

READ ST. MATT. X. 24 TO END.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord laying claim to exclusive allegiance.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be wholly loyal to Him in thought, word, and act.

POINT I.—Our Lord is still addressing the Twelve. He prepares them for insult and opposition. He reminds them that *the disciple is not above his Master*. As it was with Him, so shall it be with them. But they are to remember—(1) if they will only fear God there is no one else whom they need fear; (2) that God's protecting care is unfailing—*the very hairs of your head are numbered*; (3) they must be morally courageous and confess Christ before men. How is it with you?

POINT II.—He next prepares them for family divisions and differences. His own claim is paramount. A child must not be loved by parent, nor parent by child, more than He Himself is loved. Reflect that only God could make such a claim as this. By making the claim Christ claims to be God. Do you make family ties an excuse for disloyalty to or neglect of God?

POINT III.—Finally He reminds them that there must be the *taking up of the cross* and the *losing the life*. We must take up our cross if we would be Christ's disciples, and this means dying to the lower "life" that we may live to the higher, losing our lower life that we may gain a higher. What are you aiming at? God's will or your own ease and enjoyment?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Yield yourself unreservedly to the claim of Christ. Say often with George Herbert, "Jesus, my Master."

JANUARY 19.

The Yoke of Christ.

READ ST. MATT. XI. 25 TO END.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord graciously inviting all who are oppressed to come to Him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance and trustfulness in bearing His yoke.

POINT I.—Who could make this appeal to men? Only One could do so, viz. God. Christ's words inevitably involve the claim to be One with the Father, as the preceding verse (v. 27) testifies. No merely human teacher could dare to say, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* To accept Christ is to accept the doctrine of His Divinity. The Christ of dogma is the Christ of the Gospels.

POINT II.—*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Our Lord implies that His service is a yoke to be borne, painful at times to flesh and blood, but which will nevertheless bring rest to the soul. Have you not found it so? Can you not say, *Thy word is true from everlasting?* It is only when we try to escape from the yoke, or when we struggle *against* it, that we do not feel peace in the depths of the soul.

POINT III.—*Ye shall find rest unto your souls.* To have accepted His yoke with a meek and thankful heart is to have acquired the secret of rest. Only we need persevering effort to go on quietly carrying His yoke, never to stray or wish to stray away from it, never to struggle against it, or to grumble at its weight! What does conscience say?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more trustful and courageous in regard to God's dealings with you.

JANUARY 20.

Mercy and not Sacrifice.

READ ST. MATT. XII. TO V. 22.

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord healing the man with the withered hand on the sabbath day.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to resist the temptation to disparaging or censorious thoughts and words of others.

POINT I.—Throughout this passage our Lord teaches that the law of love and charity is superior to all ceremonial precepts. The sabbath may be broken in cases of real need, just as David ate the shew-bread or as the *priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless*. To insist on a ceremonial law in cases like these is to forget the paramount claims of charity, and so *to condemn the guiltless*.

POINT II.—*Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?* It seems difficult to believe that the Pharisees could have become so hardened and distorted in mind and conscience as not to see the true answer to this. But learn from this passage the need of constantly keeping before the mind our Lord's example. Ask yourself, How would He have acted? How would He have me act? Be merciful as you hope for mercy.

POINT III.—*A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench.* This is the principle on which our Lord always acted. He encouraged the germs of good to be found in every one. It is impossible to think of our Lord being censorious or unmerciful! What about your hard, unloving thoughts? Your sharp words? Your unkind actions? Meditate on the *kindness* of Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to think and speak kindly of others. When tempted to do otherwise ask yourself, *Must I say this unkind thing?*

JANUARY 21.

The Responsibility of Speech.

READ ST. MATT. xii. 22-38.

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord as the Word of the Father revealing God to man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for reality and sincerity in speech and social intercourse.

POINT I.—The Pharisees, in this passage, accused our Lord of casting out devils by means of Beelzebub. Our Lord, in reply, warns them against the terrible sin of ascribing what was evidently the work of the *Spirit of God* to the Evil One. It came very near, He implies, to sin against the Holy Ghost. Wherever we see good it is the work of the Holy Ghost; *this is the finger of God*. How can we dare to limit the operation of God's Spirit!

POINT II.—*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Our Lord says that the Pharisees spoke in this hard and blasphemous way because their hearts were so far from God. If we would bridle our tongues we must be learning to control our thoughts. How is it with you? Are you learning to check the beginnings of evil or hard or uncharitable thoughts?

POINT III.—Words are the expression of thought and reason. Just as our Lord as the Word manifested God, so our words should manifest ourselves. Sincerity of speech! *Every idle word that men shall speak*, etc. The fear is lest our conversation should lead others lower or further from God instead of raising them nearer to God. Watch the tone of your conversation, and pray always for a blessing on your social intercourse.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember your responsibility for the faculty of speech. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.*

Parable of the Sower.

READ ST. MATT. xiii. TO v. 24.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the sower scattering his seed over the field.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that the seed sown in your heart may bring forth abundant fruit.

POINT I.—*Then cometh the wicked one.* The parable warns us that the first cause of failure is the near presence of the Evil One. Reflect on the need of watchfulness. Why do sermons have so little effect upon us? Often because the Devil is on the alert, and as soon as we are out of church he *catcheth away* what is sown on the well-trodden pathway of the heart. Meditate on the responsibility of *understanding*, *i.e.* of taking in and retaining the good seed. Pray before hearing sermons and after.

POINT II.—The need of perseverance. This is the second cause of failure; shallow earth and rock underneath allow of no growth to the root. So the seed sown in a shallow, emotional heart springs up *with joy* at first, but only *dureth for a while*. Remember that perseverance is not natural to fallen man. We need often to pray for grace to go on faithfully.

POINT III.—The need of detachment. The third cause of failure is worldliness—*the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches.* These are the thorns which choke the seed. Single-hearted attachment to God is the remedy. The temptation to worldly ease or self-indulgence must be met by the fixed purpose to be and do in life what God wills.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to go steadily on, cherishing the good seed, and *bringing forth fruit with patience.*

JANUARY 23.

Parables of the Kingdom.

READ ST. MATT. xiii. 24 TO END.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord speaking to the people in parables, and so getting His hearers to think.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may give more attention to our Lord's words.

POINT I.—*The preciousness of the kingdom.* This truth is suggested by the parable of the Pearl of Great Price. It is so precious that the merchant *selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field* where the treasure lay concealed. How precious is the Gospel to you? What would your life be without it? Can you say, *The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me: than thousands of gold and silver*¹?

POINT II.—*The gradual expansion of the kingdom.* This is suggested by the Mustard Seed and the Leaven. The Mustard Seed points to the outward fact, the Leaven to the hiddenness of the method. The seed grows gradually into a tree, and yet it grows imperceptibly like the Leaven. The Leaven bids you think of your influence on those round you, the Mustard Seed of your duty to foreign missions.

POINT III.—*The mixture of good and evil in the Church.* This is taught by the Tares. The evil is the work of a personal enemy—the Devil; but we are not to be impatient like the servants in the parable. We cannot cure the ills in the Church in a hurry. God is watching, and He is supreme. We need patience and faith. *He will not be afraid of any evil tidings: for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.*²

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Devotion to duty, patience, trustfulness.

¹ Ps. cxix. 72.

² Ps. cxii. 7.

The Death of St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. MATT. xiv. TO v. 13.

His disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. John the Baptist in prison awaiting his death.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to accomplish faithfully the work which God has given you to do.

POINT I.—One special characteristic of St. John was his courage in rebuking Herod. What gave him this courage? The fear of God, and a life detached from the world. If we fear God, we need fear no one else. Is this fear of God an ever-present reality with you? Are you bold in speaking out against what is wrong and bad? If not, why? Is it because you fear men?

POINT II.—Herod, on the other hand, was a moral coward. Immersed in worldliness, and in the midst of his courtiers, he was afraid to act up to his conscience. It is in society and at times of recreation that we are tempted to lower our standard. What says conscience? Realize the need of prayer before recreation and social gatherings.

POINT III.—The beheading of so great and so blameless a man as St. John at the request of a bad woman makes us realize the fierce antagonism of the world to God. What does the applause of the world signify if only we can keep true to God? *Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for perseverance and courage to go on bravely with your life's work.

JANUARY 25.

St. Paul.

READ ACTS XXVI. TO V. 21.

I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul making his defence before Agrippa.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be ready always to respond to the voice of conscience.

POINT I.—*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* St. Paul's conversion was the culmination of gentle promptings of conscience which had been going on within him for some time. Be watchful for the voice of conscience. It comes at times bidding us give up this or that scheme ; or warning us that we are careless or self-seeking in our work ; or illuminating the soul with a true knowledge of self.

POINT II.—*I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.* The first impulse is sometimes to rebel, to think God is dealing hardly with us, to despond, to be faint-hearted, to give up strenuous effort, to go on acting against conscience in a slothful or a self-willed way, to murmur against God's Providence.

POINT III.—*I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.* The only good way is to be ready and willing to co-operate with and respond to the Divine promptings ; to rise up to the indications of God's will, whether they be distasteful to us or otherwise. The one real object in life is to be and do what God requires. Nothing else really signifies. St. Paul cast all his prospects aside in obedience to the heavenly vision. How is it with you ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Obedience to conscience.

JANUARY 26.

The Ship in the Storm.

READ ST. MATT. xiv. 13 TO END.

The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the disciples in peril on the lake.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for trustfulness and restfulness amid difficulties and dangers.

POINT I.—After the great miracle Jesus puts the disciples into a boat while He goes up into the mountain to pray. The storm arises, and the disciples are alone in the boat. So in life, after some signal blessing, Jesus seems at times to leave us. He allows the snares and storms of difficulties to come upon us. Why? To test our faith and trust and love. He knows what is happening. He has not really left us.

POINT II.—*And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them.* Observe it was *the fourth watch*, i.e. the last watch before the break of day. So in life, He seems to leave us so long battling with our difficulties and trials; but in reality He will never try us beyond what we can bear. Faith must expect to be tried and tested. It is hard to hold on, but we must. Are you holding on or giving way?

POINT III.—*It is I; be not afraid.* At last He comes! Man's extremity is God's opportunity. It is sometimes "the darkest hour before the dawn." But at last He comes, and all is well. The wind ceases, there is a great calm. *Wherfore didst thou doubt?* He was really with them all the time! How we need to pray in the hard passages of life, Lord, increase and strengthen our faith!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more restful, because more trustful.

JANUARY 27.

The Heart of Man.

READ ST. MATT. XV. TO V. 21.

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart ; and they defile the man.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord rebuking the Pharisees for their empty adherence to forms.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for reality in your religious life.

POINT I.—The religious leaders of the day were extraordinarily blind to the real nature of religion ! To eat bread with unwashen hands ! Who could think that such a breach of ceremonial etiquette could touch a man's moral life ? The observance of outward ceremonial law can never be put on a level with the observance of the moral law, still less above it ! The end of all religious observances is a moral end—to make us better Christians, more Christ-like.

POINT II.—*To eat bread with unwashen hands defileth not a man !* Our Lord clearly teaches that what really affects our moral life is what we allow ourselves to think about ! *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.* These given way to, yielded to, do *defile a man* ; they make him morally worse. Hence the need of controlling and checking the beginning of evil thoughts.

POINT III.—*Their heart is far from Me.* Why ? Because they so mistook the nature of the moral law as to set it at nought (our Lord instances the Fifth Commandment) by their ceremonial traditions ! What is your danger ? Is your religion real ? Are prayer, sacraments, church-going making you more really loving to God and man ? If not, why ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a real knowledge of self.

Perseverance in Prayer.

READ ST. MATT. XV. 21 TO END.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Syro-Phoenician woman beseeching our Lord to heal her daughter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in prayer.

POINT I.—This miracle is a sort of parable teaching us to persevere in prayer. *He answered her not a word.* Complete silence is maintained by our Lord, as if He heeded her not. So with us, God seems not to hear. We pray, and apparently there is no answer. The lesson which this woman teaches us is to go on praying in spite of this. Examine your own conduct.

POINT II.—*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Here is refusal, worse than silence. The woman was a foreigner, and Christ says He is sent only to Israel. Still she perseveres! *Lord, help me.* Here is her wonderful faith. She heeds not the silence, she heeds not the refusal! What an example to us!

POINT III.—*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* Worse than silence, worse than refusal, there is reproach! *Dogs!* But she is undaunted! She takes Christ at His word. “Dogs! This is the very ground on which I appeal; dogs have a right to something!” *Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs,* etc. “Treat me as a dog, and give me what I ask!” Herein lay her marvellous faith, and it wrung consent from our Lord. *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Persevere manfully in prayer. *Give Him no rest!*

JANUARY 29.

The Confession of St. Peter.

READ ST. MATT. XVI. TO V. 24.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord looking amid the shifting sands of current opinion for some rock on which He might safely build.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to apprehend more fully the revealed doctrine of the Person of Christ, very God and very Man.

POINT I.—*Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias, etc.* Here were the shifting sands on which it would be impossible to build. So now, admiration for Christ's human character, if divorced from a belief in His Divinity, is useless, for He made claims which, if He were only a man, would be inconsistent with His being a good man! How could a man lay claim to judge the world?

POINT II.—*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* This confession of His Divinity was the Rock on which our Lord could build. It involves the belief in the Incarnation. The Church is founded on the Rock of the Incarnation. It is God Himself Who took human nature upon Him to save and to revivify it. No mere man, though the greatest of men, could do this.

POINT III.—*Get thee behind me, Satan.* This great boon which the Incarnation was to bring to men could only be bought at the cost of suffering, ignominy, death. Christ foretells this, and it is Peter's inability to understand this that He so sternly rebukes. Suffering must come before glory: our Lord came to suffer and to rise through suffering to life. So (in our measure) we have to face suffering and death. This world is one where the Christian must suffer!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Look up to our Lord with courage, gratitude, and faith.

The Transfiguration.

READ ST. MATT. xvii. TO v. 14.

He was transfigured before them.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord in His Transfiguration glory talking with Moses and Elias.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more spiritual insight into the meaning of the Bible.

POINT I.—The Transfiguration signified the passing away of the Law and the Prophets and the dawning of the new dispensation. *This is My beloved Son . . . hear ye Him.* The appearance of Moses and Elias brings vividly before us the reality of the life beyond the grave, and the assurance of the power of recognizing and of being recognized by others in the spirit-world.

POINT II.—St. Luke tells us that it was *as He prayed* that He was transfigured. The Divine glory which our Lord veiled (while on earth) beneath His Human Form burst forth, as it were, during His prayers on the Mount. Reflect how little power of concentration we have in prayer, so little realization of the glory of the Divine Presence.

POINT III.—*It is good for us to be here.* Our prayers are on the mountain-top, but our work lies in the valley below. We go up to pray in order to get strength and encouragement for the work of the day ; but we may not neglect that work which God has given us to do. We by the grace of God become more and more transfigured by prayer and intercourse with God, and so more fitted to do our work for Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aim afresh to-day at recollecting the Presence of God.

The Lunatic Child.

READ ST. MATT. xvii. 14 TO END.

Lord, have mercy on my son : for he is lunatick.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord coming down from the Mount of the Transfiguration.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may gather strength in prayer to face all difficulties.

POINT I.—What a contrast—the peace and light of the mountain-top, the pain and perplexity of the world below! Such a scene is a parable of life. We leave our difficulties and go up to the mountain to pray. We come down: our difficulties are still about us when we return, but we have new strength given to us wherewith we may deal with them.

POINT II.—Only our Lord can really solve our difficulties. If we try to face them in our own strength we are certain to fail. If we are with Him He will give us strength. Reliance on Him will see us through all difficulties, and sometimes we have to learn that apparent failure is real success.

POINT III.—*Prayer and fasting.* It may well have been that the disciples had relied too much on themselves. In any case, our Lord clearly testifies to the benefits which may arise from prayer and self-denial. *Fulness of bread, abundance of idleness*—these do not conduce to great spiritual results.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Amid the moral perplexities and difficulties of the world, let us cling to Christ and His teaching.

The Example of a Child.

READ ST. MATT. XVIII. TO V. 11.

Jesus called a little child unto Him.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene—the disciples taught by the example of a little child.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to reverence children, and to learn from their example.

POINT I.—The disciples had asked Jesus, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* Our Lord at once took a child, *and set him in the midst of them*; and then told them that their state of mind was the opposite of that which a man must have if he would enter the kingdom of heaven. To strive to put away thoughts of self-seeking and emulation is the duty of Christians.

POINT II.—The simplicity and obedience of a little child are a great example. He trusts and obeys his parents without doubting or disputing. So we should learn to trust God in simplicity and obedience. Often His dealings with us may be perplexing and mysterious, but if our one aim be to do His will we shall not question His goodness.

POINT III.—Our Lord adds grave words as to the blessedness of *receiving* and the danger of *offending* a child. This should lead us to question ourselves in regard to our behaviour with children. Do you regard them as a blessing from God? To be trained for Him? Whom He created for His service and glory? What is your example in word and act?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let me learn to be more single-hearted, obedient, and trustful from the example of children.

FEBRUARY 2.

Forgiveness.

READ ST. MATT. xviii. 21 TO END.

I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the unmerciful servant imploring pardon of his lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a forgiving and compassionate heart.

POINT I.—*How often? Till seven times?* It is certain that St. Peter was giving, as he thought, the widest limit possible. Some Jewish doctors had enjoined forgiveness for three offences, but not for more. St. Peter saw that the Christian rule must be higher, but he could not suggest more than seven times. Meditate on the difference of standard this implies between the Jewish and Christian dispensations.

POINT II.—*Until seventy times seven.* That means that there is to be no limit at all to our forgiveness. This is taught also in the parable which follows: one hundred pence and ten thousand talents are practically incomensurable, and are meant to suggest that idea. As well try to compare something finite with infinity. Realize that our debt to God is this ten thousand talents; debts men may owe to us are as nothing in comparison!

POINT III.—As the servant would not forgive his fellow-servant, his lord cancels his previous pardon. So will God deal with us! Do we want to know how God's Face will look towards us at the last day? It will look as we have looked on others—kindly, compassionately, or the reverse. Examine your conduct towards others, and be watchful.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve never to harbour a grudge or to indulge a feeling of dislike.

FEBRUARY 3.

Evangelical Counsels.

READ ST. MATT. xix. 3-27.

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich young man going away sorrowful.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to respond to God's call wherever it may lead you.

POINT I.—In this passage we have our Lord's teaching about "voluntary celibacy" and "voluntary poverty." The passage shows clearly that there are persons called with these special vocations. A single life consecrated to God's special service is certainly a great vocation. It has its own special dangers and difficulties, but it has its own freedom and detachment.

POINT II.—This young man was clearly called to a life of poverty. That was the way of perfection for *him*. He had great possessions, and he failed to respond to this vocation. How often people are hindered by wealth rather than helped! It is so hard for the rich to realize the need of God or the transitory nature of riches. Detachment!

POINT III.—For each individual the only important question is, To what is God calling *me*? Am I willing to respond to His call so far as I can discern it? Do I keep my ear open, listening for His call? If so, all is well. *I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for obedience. Dread self-will in life. Desire to respond to and to co-operate with God's call.

FEBRUARY 4.

Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

READ ST. MATT. XX. TO V. 17.

Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene of the labourers standing idle in the market-place.

PRELUDE II.—Pray faithfully to labour at the work God has given you to do.

POINT I.—God wants workmen, and if we are really to be His servants we must look forward to a life of real work. Do you realize the value of time? How much time in your life you have already wasted! We have at best only a fragment of our life left to consecrate to God. Think of God's life: *Semper agens, semper quietus*—always at work, always restful.

POINT II.—The men who grumbled were the men who had bargained with the householder. (To all the others it had been said, *Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*) This is a warning that we are not to look upon our life's work as a contract. We give ourselves up to God without any reserve, and then to the work which He gives us.

POINT III.—Our reward is God Himself. We shall receive Him in proportion as we are *capable* of receiving Him. God is inexhaustible, and we shall find our full satisfaction in Him for ever and ever. We cannot understand this; but we can understand that nothing here on earth can permanently satisfy a being such as man! Let your heart and will go out to God!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—“Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and the heart is restless till it rests in Thee.”

FEBRUARY 5.

True Greatness.

READ ST. MATT. XX. 17 TO END.

Ye know not what ye ask.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mother of Zebedee's children and her sons making their request to our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to seek only real greatness.

POINT I.—The mother was ambitious for her sons, and the sons for themselves. They were thinking of high place and worldly honour. True greatness, our Lord explains, has no necessary connection with these things. It consists in the capacity for service and suffering—drinking a cup, being baptized with a baptism.

POINT II.—*It shall not be so among you.* Whosoever wishes to be first must be a “servant” or minister. He must learn to serve and to suffer, for in such suffering and service real greatness consists. Our Lord Himself came to minister to or serve others, and to sacrifice Himself! So the Apostles had to learn, and we have to learn, that God's service, and the service of man for God's sake, is to be our ambition.

POINT III.—Think how this was illustrated in the case of St. John and St. James. St. James was the first Apostle to suffer martyrdom: St. John was the longest lived of all of them. The one was an example of sacrifice, the other of long service. These are the ambitions to set before us. God and His service must be the aim and object of our aspirations.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cast out worldly ambitions. Pray for the spirit of love and self-sacrifice.

FEBRUARY 6.

The Cleansing of the Temple.

READ ST. MATT. xxi. TO V. 23.

My house shall be called the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Jesus driving the traders from the Temple.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to drive out rigorously from your heart and mind all that is wrong.

POINT I.—This is the second time our Lord cleansed the Temple. He did it once at the beginning of His ministry, and now once more at the end. It was a marked assertion of His authority. How often has He visited your heart and driven from it bad thoughts ! Yet how often they return ! Remember that you never *need* give way to a wrong thought. You have power to cast it out. Do you always *wish* to do so ?

POINT II.—*The house of prayer.* To drive out bad thoughts we must supplant them with good ones. That is the great principle to go upon. “No use to conquer unless you colonize.” One great aim of meditation is to provide good thoughts and ejaculatory prayers which will come into the mind at spare moments. How often during the day do you think of your meditation ?

POINT III.—*The blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple ; and He healed them.* We may bring our troubles to Christ—our heart-aches and fears and misgivings—with the certainty that He will deal mercifully and gently with us. When we cannot see our path plainly, when we cannot walk aright along life’s journey, He will console and comfort and guide us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray, *Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts.*

FEBRUARY 7.

Parable of the Two Sons.

READ ST. MATT. xxi. 28-33.

Whether of them twain did the will of his father?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the parable as spoken by our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not make professions without trying to live up to them.

POINT I.—Our Lord has Himself explained the first application of the parable. The publicans and harlots (*i.e.* those who made no profession) said “No” to the teaching of St. John the Baptist, but afterward they *repented, and went*. The Pharisees made a show of assent by their scrupulous adherence of ceremonial laws, but neglected such weighty matters as “judgment, mercy, and faith,” and so they *went not*. Hence our Lord’s severe condemnation of them.

POINT II.—We are all in the position of the one who said, *I go, sir*; for we have in Baptism pledged ourselves to His service. Hence we should look carefully and see what our baptismal obligations are—Renunciation, Faith, and Obedience! Do I think enough of these great vows? How far have I been from adequately fulfilling them?

POINT III.—The parable is a warning specially to “religious” people. Often we are so ignorant about ourselves from want of true self-knowledge that there is a real danger lest we should find that we are not really serving God! Watch against any feeling of self-complacency. “He who is not striving to be better cannot be sure that he is even good.” *God be merciful to me, a sinner*, represents the only safe attitude.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to read over your baptismal vows again.

Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son.

READ ST. MATT. xxii. TO V. 15.

A certain king which made a marriage for his son.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the refusal of the guests to come to the wedding feast.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of God, more hatred of sin.

POINT I.—They had accepted the invitation long before. When the time arrived servants were sent, after the custom of the East, to conduct the guests to the banquet. It was this further call which they refused. We are made God's children in Baptism. In later life He sends us further calls—to ordination, to a more complete self-dedication, to separation from the world. Are you ready to respond to these further calls? *They would not come!*

POINT II.—*He sent forth other servants . . . but they made light of it.* So God calls us again and again; but from having at first merely excused themselves, they pass on to more overt opposition. *They went their ways, one to his farm, etc.* The sin of ignoring God is shown to result in idolatry; *their idols are silver and gold.* No time for God! It is the same now. To ignore God is really to set up some idol in the heart.

POINT III.—*A man which had not on a wedding garment.* He had thought to escape notice. Like Judas, no one suspected him; but the king who came in to inspect the guests detected him. There is no passing muster in a crowd when we come before God. We must *put on Christ*, i.e. there must be an inner conformity to the Divine character, sympathy with God, hatred of what is wrong—this is the wedding garment.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Watch yourself. Pray for self-knowledge. Cling to God.

FEBRUARY 9.

God and Cæsar.

READ ST. MATT. xxii. 15-23.

Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's ; and unto God the things that are God's.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord's marvellous patience amid the contentious questionings of all classes.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for equanimity and patience amid distractions.

POINT I.—The Herodians and Pharisees, though naturally opposed to one another, yet unite now in common hostility to Jesus. If He said "No" to the question, the Herodians would accuse Him as a revolutionary ; if he said "Yes," the Pharisee would denounce Him as unpatriotic. It is not the business of a religious teacher to mix himself up in the politics of the day. Our Lord avoids the snare.

POINT II.—In answering, He sets forth a principle applicable for all time. He accepts facts as they were ; the coin showed that Cæsar had his rights (allowed because of the sins of the Jews), and these rights must be respected. He recognizes facts ; He enters into no political questions. It is a plain duty for Christians to be obedient to the State in everything which does not militate against the law of God.

POINT III.—The things of Cæsar ; the things of God ! Everything is God's, but God has His "ministers" in things civil as in things ecclesiastical. "The strength of any Church is the godliness of its individual members." This is the most practical lesson to draw from our Lord's words. If we are each one rendering to God the things that are God's in our daily life, all will come right.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence for those in authority.
Fear God : Honour the king.

FEBRUARY 10.

¶harisatism.

READ ST. MATT. xxii. 41 TO xxiii. 13.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

PRELUDE I.—Picture our Lord warning the people against the example of the scribes and Pharisees, while He tells them to be obedient to them.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to understand our Lord rightly.

POINT I.—The scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and yet our Lord denounces their example. Why? Because they pretended to be religious, and were hypocrites. They were full of pride, conceit, and self-complacency, while pretending to be far otherwise. Learn to dread thinking yourself better than others. Self-complacency is an evidence and a manifestation of spiritual pride.

POINT II.—*Call no man your father upon the earth.* Our Lord does not forbid the literal use of the word "father," either as denoting natural or spiritual paternity; but He does forbid us so to attach ourselves to any father or rabbi as to overshadow or obscure His Own paramount claim on the entire allegiance of the soul—*One is your Master, even Christ.* How is it with you?

POINT III.—*Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.* We must always dread putting ourselves forward. It may sometimes be a duty, and we may not in such cases shrink back, but always try and sift your motives for coming forward. Is it for the glory of God and the good of His Church, or is it your own vain-glory? *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Loyalty to Christ: the hidden life of goodness.

FEBRUARY 11.

Opportunities Forfeited.

READ ST. MATT. xxiii. 13 TO END.

How often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . and ye would not!

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord taking His final leave of Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not miss the opportunities which He vouchsafes you.

POINT I.—*How often would I have gathered thy children together. . . .* A great claim is implied in these words of our Lord. He claims to have done for the Jewish nation throughout its history that which God Himself had done. He claims to be Divine. So He pleads with our souls. Look back over your past life and consider how you have used your opportunities for doing good or for getting closer to God.

POINT II.—*Ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.* The only true way of showing freedom from the guilt of their fathers was (not by building the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers killed, but) by receiving Him to Whom the prophets had borne witness ; but they killed Him !

POINT III.—Similarly we are often *blind* : we extol the “good old days,” and think, if we had lived long ago, we should have been so much better than we are. Vain thought ! “The very men who pretended to honour dead prophets, saw no beauty in a living Christ !” So we fail, too, to recognize the opportunities we have in our own days, while we vainly look back to some ideal period in Church history which has never had any real existence !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thank God for the opportunities of the present, and resolve to use them faithfully.

FEBRUARY 12.

The Coming of the Son of Man.

READ ST. MATT. XXIV. TO V. 29.

He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord uttering this great prophecy of the signs of His coming.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to live in the hope and expectation of His Advent.

POINT I.—This great prophecy is a mingling of predictions about the last siege of Jerusalem and about the end of the world. It is the latter theme which predominates throughout. Catastrophes, such as the final siege of Jerusalem, are to be regarded as preludes and types of the greatest of all catastrophes—the end of the world and the coming of the Son of man in glory.

POINT II.—The early Christians lived in the expectation and hope of this coming, and it is the temper of mind in which all Christians should live now. We should regard the Second Coming as possible at any time, and live as we should wish to have lived if it should actually happen in our lifetime, calmly going on with the work which God has given us, but with the eye of the soul looking for our Lord's approach.

POINT III.—*Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* The saints and martyrs—the eagle-sighted ones—will gather round Christ at His coming. Oh, that we might be found among the number of the blessed whose eagle eyes have pierced through the thick veil of visible and tangible objects, and have rested habitually on the vision of the coming Christ!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire for His coming. Watchfulness and prayer.

FEBRUARY 13.

Watchfulness.

READ ST. MATT. XXIV. 29 TO END.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord warning the Church of every generation to watch for His Second Coming.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that He may find you ready to meet Him.

POINT I.—To watch for Christ implies that we are *hoping* for His coming. If we are so well satisfied with this world that His coming would be an unwelcome interruption, then there is something terribly wrong in our lives. Real longing for His coming was a characteristic of the first Christians. If we would imitate them we must never be so *absorbed* in our business as not to be able gladly to think of Him.

POINT II.—This involves detachment from earthly cares and possessions. We must sit loosely to this world and its ways of looking at things if we would really watch for Christ, taking thankfully the blessings and comforts He may send us, but never engrossed in such things. The heart must be learning to fix itself on God.

POINT III.—*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* Christ dwells on the suddenness and the unexpectedness of His coming. As a thief in the night. What a comparison for Him to use! How startling it is to find such an illustration! Doubtless this is to make us more careful, more watchful, more ready.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray to be ready: to be found watching: to be found, like the *faithful servant*, doing the work He has given you.

FEBRUARY 14.

Parable of the Talents.

READ ST. MATT. XXV. 14-21.

The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene thus described.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for faithfulness in the use of the gifts God has given you.

POINT I.—Gifts are useless (and worse) if we do not use or cultivate them. The character is formed and moulded by the diligent employment of the faculties God has given us. If we do not use them they rust, and we shall be held responsible at the Great Day. This applies to all gifts, whether of body, mind, or soul. Are you using and turning to good account your talents?

POINT II.—*Thou wicked and slothful servant.* He was wicked because he was slothful; but why was he slothful? First, because he took a false view of life. He compared himself with others, and thought that as he only had one talent he could do no good with it. Secondly, he had such a hard and false idea of God. Those two ideas paralyzed all his efforts.

POINT III.—God is always a God of love. He gives us what He does give us because He loves us. He withholds other gifts equally because He loves us. The use of our gifts is a return of love for love. He is not a taskmaster. The more we use gifts the more He enables us to do for Him. *Unto every one that hath, etc.* If we neglect to use them, the power to use them disappears. *From him that hath not, etc.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—We do not really possess or “have” gifts unless we are doing our best to use them.

FEBRUARY 15.

Corporal Works of Mercy.

READ ST. MATT. XXV. 31 TO END.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the terrible scene which our Lord here depicts in parable.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be found numbered among the blessed ones.

POINT I.—This is one of the most awe-inspiring passages in the Gospel. The “King” is our Lord Himself, and what a claim it is that He makes! *Before Him shall be gathered all nations!* What more pressing question can there be than the question whether we shall be found among the sheep? Consider the possibility of the other contingency—*Depart from Me, ye cursed!*

POINT II.—Our Lord here bids us see *Him* in the poor and the sick and the outcast; it would appear that this is to be one great test at the Day of Judgment, whether we have helped those in distress. It is to be applied to *all*; so that if (for any good reason) we cannot personally visit the sick or suffering, we must put our responsibility into commission, and do what we can to send others. How about your almsgiving?

POINT III.—The *surprise* which each express is noteworthy. It shows how easily we may neglect our opportunities in this respect, through carelessness or want of consideration for the poor. Strive to be on your guard against missing opportunities for doing acts of kindness to others.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try and keep alive in your heart something of the terror which this parable of our Lord inspires.

The Anointing at Bethany.

READ ST. MATT. xxvi. 1-14.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, . . . there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene in the house of Simon.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love and devotion to our Lord.

POINT I.—The day was probably the Saturday or Friday before Palm Sunday. Lazarus, whom Christ had raised, was there; Martha served, and Mary poured the perfume on His head. It was thus kings were honoured. She brought her *best* to express her reverence, gratitude, and love. When we give to God, let us give something which we really miss. It is a great temptation to be niggardly in giving.

POINT II.—*To what purpose is this waste?* So spake Judas, as St. John tells us. Judas was covetous, and regretted this extravagance of Mary (as he thought it). There is a real danger of covetousness getting hold of us in middle and later life: its great remedy is almsgiving. Our Lord, Who spurned luxuries, nevertheless accepts the offering of Mary's gratitude and love.

POINT III.—*She did it for My burial, i.e. to prepare Me for My burial.* A week later and our Lord's Body was at rest in the sepulchre. She had, maybe, foreboded His death. She could not but be aware of the danger He was in in going up to Jerusalem. This act of hers is recounted wherever the Gospel story is preached, while the memory of so many great men have perished! This shows the value God sets on love and self-sacrifice.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cultivate a sense of personal devotion and gratitude to our Lord.

Gethsemane.

READ ST. MATT. xxvi. 31-57.

He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord in Gethsemane.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never despair in times of depression.

POINT I.—The same three Apostles were with our Lord at the Transfiguration and at the raising of Jairus' daughter. Having seen His power and glory they could bear to be with Him in His Agony. We also must expect our times of despondency and depression; but we must not give way; we must throw ourselves back on the experience of the past. In Gethsemane remember Tabor.

POINT II.—Our Lord had a natural human shrinking from pain. He prays that obedience to the Divine Will may be compatible with absence of suffering. *If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.* Assure yourself of His sympathy with you when you have to face suffering and darkness of spirit.

POINT III.—*Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* There is no desire to escape from obedience itself. To desire to escape from obedience would be sinful. "God's Will is our peace." He wills nothing but what is good for us. So we learn submission to His Will, and we become more and more conformed to the likeness of our Lord.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to accept all the discipline of life as allowed by God's love.

FEBRUARY 18.

St. Peter's Denial.

READ ST. MATT. XXVI. 57 TO END.

Again he denied with an oath, I do not know the Man.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter among the servants denying our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for self-mistrust.

POINT I.—St. Peter was so confident of his loyalty the night before. *Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.* Yet now he finds himself in company where circumstances are against him, and he falls. If we pray, *Lead us not into temptation*, we must not recklessly run into places where we know we shall be tempted. Do you avoid occasions of sin?

POINT II.—Why did the Apostle fall? Because of his cowardice, his moral cowardice. Think of our bondage to the opinions of men, our slavery to men's praise and blame. Consider St. Peter's age, and be fearful. In childhood, in youth, in advancing life, in old age, we need to remember how weak we are in the presence of others.

POINT III.—*And Peter remembered the word of Jesus.* Why? Because *the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.* God's eye! It is always upon us, but we do not remember it. It is by thinking of God's Presence and by looking for His approval that we get rid of crippling self-consciousness and moral cowardice.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Ponder the words, *And in my prosperity I said, etc.* (Ps. xxx. 6-8).

FEBRUARY 19.

Jesus before Pilate.

READ ST. MATT. xxvii. TO V. 27.

Why, what evil hath He done?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord before Pilate : Pilate desiring to release Him.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage to act up to conscience.

POINT I.—Our Lord before Pilate introduces us to one of the most momentous scenes in history. Meditate first on this—that a crisis such as this one in Pilate's life may come to us at any time, and these crises reveal to us (and to the world) what manner of men we are. Crises gather up the chief tendencies within us and make manifest our true character. Be watchful.

POINT II.—Pilate knew that our Lord was innocent. *I find no fault in Him. Why, what evil hath He done? He knew that for envy they had delivered Him.* Yet he acted against knowledge and against conscience. Look into yourself. Have you never given way to popular applause and sacrificed duty for expediency?

POINT III.—He was warned by his wife ; also by Herod, who found nothing worthy of death in the prisoner. Again and again it is clear he was warned by his own conscience. Reflect, God will not, cannot, save us against our will. We *can* always go against conscience. Cultivate a tender conscientiousness and act promptly under the guidance of conscience.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Watchfulness against moral cowardice and against shirking responsibility.

FEBRUARY 20.

The Crucifixion.

READ ST. MATT. XXVII. 27-57.

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Blessed Lord making this mysterious cry on the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray in times of pain and desolation to hold on to God.

POINT I.—*There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.* It would appear that our Lord uttered this awful and mysterious cry as the darkness cleared away. It expresses, may we say, the necessary separation of sin from God. *He was made sin for us.* He suffered His human soul to be bereft of the consciousness of God's Presence. Think what sin means. You cannot have God and your sins!

POINT II.—In this terrible hour our Lord entered into all the perplexities which beset human life. It is the cry of the perplexed servant of God in every age as the chaos and confusion and sin of the world press on him. Times of depression come to all men, and our Lord would show that He entered fully into the deepest possible depression which can befall man. He assures us thus of His intense sympathy.

POINT III.—Yet He does not explain! He entered into it, but He would have us learn to live patiently and humbly under this discipline of ignorance in which we find ourselves. We must, in all times of despondency, hold on to God by acts of Faith, Hope, and Love. He still says, "*My God.*"

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Take courage for your next attack of depression and despondency.

FEBRUARY 21.

The Burial of Jesus.

READ ST. MATT. xxvii. 57 TO END.

He rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Joseph of Arimathæa begging for our Lord's Body and burying It.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be so buried with Him by mortifying all that is wrong in you.

POINT I.—Another Evangelist tells us that Joseph went in *boldly* and begged the Body of Jesus. It is then added that though he was a counsellor (*i.e.* of the Sanhedrin), yet he had not consented to the counsel and deed of them (in condemning our Lord). His conduct now illustrates the courage which an exact conscientiousness always implies and nourishes. It is a bad conscience which makes us cowards.

POINT II.—Joseph's act was one of sympathy, respect, love, and devotion, yet not one of faith. He never seems to have anticipated the Resurrection: but he was true to what he believed. He acted up to his faith in our Lord as a great Teacher, and he felt that he could do no less than bury His Body tenderly and reverently. If we could always act likewise, God would do for us "more than we ask or think."

POINT III.—Mystically we were buried with Christ in Holy Baptism: this pledges us to mortify our "corrupt affections." Are we doing this all through life, and specially as Lent draws near? The Burial of our Lord thus should have its moral counterpart in our lives, in order that we may rise with Him to newness of life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say, and keep in your mind to-day, the Collect for Easter Eve.

FEBRUARY 22.

Our Lord's Last Commission.

READ ST. MATT. xxviii.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be faithful in fulfilling your share of this great charge.

POINT I.—We have here the “marching orders of the Church,” addressed to the general Christian Body, not only to the clergy. Hence Missionary work is everybody’s duty. It is not a question of inclination, but of duty and privilege. How far are you fulfilling your share of this responsibility? If unable to go out yourself, what about your prayers and alms for Mission work?

POINT II.—*Teaching them to observe all things, etc.* Baptism and instruction go hand-in-hand. We have a duty towards the poor who cannot buy instruction. To help on religious and Christian schools is a duty, especially an urgent duty in these days of godless instruction. Are there any ways in which you might help in this matter more than you do?

POINT III.—*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* This promise of Christ’s perpetual Presence is a guarantee of the perpetuity and safety of His Church. Do you remember this in times of crisis? He is in the Boat. Do you remember it in regard to your own life? He is with you and within you. He will not fail you unless you desert Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Keep before you to-day the thought of what our Lord would have you do for His Church.

FEBRUARY 23.

Fishers of Men.

READ ST. MARK i. TO v. 21.

I will make you to become fishers of men.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene on the lake and the call of Simon and Andrew.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that in your sphere of life you, too, may be a “fisher of men.”

POINT I.—*Fishers of men.* The word used in another Gospel is, “Thou shalt catch men alive.” The Gospel is a Gospel of new life. Our Lord came to bring men real life. *I am come that they might have life.* Real life is a life lived in Him, united to Him. He Whom we behold outwardly as our Example, is inwardly the Source of our new life. We are “alive” in proportion as we are believing in and living in Him.

POINT II.—The “power of the Lord” depicted so vividly in this Gospel of St. Mark—this Gospel of activity—comes as grace unto the heart and soul of the believer. We are nearly all called to an active life. Let us see that we do not give way to indolence, and also that we consecrate our activity to Jesus Christ.

POINT III.—Grace is the power of God working in the heart and soul of man. It comes to us, in virtue of the Passion and Resurrection, in answer to prayer and through the Sacraments. How far are you conscious of this life of grace? How far does it lead you to desire to bring others more and more within its sphere?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to try to bring some other person nearer to Jesus Christ.

FEBRUARY 24.

Private Prayer.

READ ST. MARK i. 21 TO END.

Rising up a great while before day, He . . . departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord praying alone before daybreak.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to imitate His example in some measure.

POINT I.—Here is a picture which should help us in our private prayers. Solitude and prolonged prayer. As a rule, it may well be that we cannot give a long time to our morning or evening prayers ; but occasionally we should set ourselves to practise prolonged communion with God. What says conscience ?

POINT II.—For prayer is not merely asking for what we want. It is a lifting up of the heart and soul to God in loving communion with Him. What God wants is our love, and love is increased by our knowledge of Him, and we shall know Him in proportion to the reality and frequency of our intercourse with Him.

POINT III.—The more we pray, the more we shall desire to pray ; for, just as we think about those we love, so, as we grow in the love of God, we shall think about Him more, and therefore pray to Him more. Thus the thought of God and the love of God act and re-act upon one another. We shall find ourselves speaking to God, while travelling, while waiting, constantly throughout the day.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cherish the desire for a heart united to God.

FEBRUARY 25.

The Purpose of Christ's Coming.

READ ST. MARK ii. TO v. 23.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

PRELUDE I.—Consider our Lord dining at the house of Levi the Publican.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be a blessing to others in your social intercourse.

POINT I.—The Scribes and Pharisees found fault with our Lord because He ate with “publicans and sinners.” They were self-righteous, and, like all self-righteous people, they were hard on others. The first foundation of spiritual advance must be laid in self-dissatisfaction and distrust. Have you realized this? Do you try to put away censorious thoughts?

POINT II.—*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.* Here our Lord plainly tells us that the end for which He came into the world was to save sinners. This should fill us with thankfulness and hope when we feel out of heart at our own failures and weaknesses. It is for us in mercy that He came, and His Blood cleanses us from all sin.

POINT III.—This is an opportunity for reflecting on our own influence in social intercourse. Our Lord went where He was asked, and we may, generally speaking, do the same; but what is our influence like on those whom we meet? On servants? on the other guests? Do you pray before going out into society? Some ejaculatory prayer, at all events, should always be put up to God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to watch over yourself and your behaviour when in society.

FEBRUARY 26.

The Sabbath.

READ ST. MARK ii. 23 to iii. 13.

The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate David and his companions eating the shewbread.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for largeness of heart.

POINT I.—The disciples, plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, gave offence. Our Lord, by His reply, teaches us how to observe or disregard merely ceremonial rules. Necessity and charity, real need, and the good we may do to others, are the dispensing occasions. If hungry, they might pluck and eat. If the man was suffering, he might be healed.

POINT II.—*The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.* How much is involved in all this! The Sabbath was a means, not an end. Its prohibition of work was in order to give men an opportunity of rest, not to prevent them doing good. So of the rules of the Church now. They are subject to the law of love and charity.

POINT III.—*When He had looked round about on them with anger.* Our Lord's anger was a righteous anger which cannot endure insincerity and hypocrisy. Let us look well to our motives. If our religion is making us hard and censorious, it is not doing much for us. Christ's religion must make us Christlike.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of the law of charity, and the place it has in your life.

FEBRUARY 27.

The Call of the Twelve.

READ ST. MARK iii. 13 TO END.

He calleth unto Him whom He would.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene after our Lord had spent the night in prayer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to respond to the vocation of God.

POINT I.—*Whom He HIMSELF would.* This is the force of the original. It was His own act. The reality of the Call to Ordination is the same now. He really “calls” the clergy. The call sometimes comes gradually and almost imperceptibly, sometimes suddenly and with overwhelming force. But for all it comes, and we are asked at Ordination, “Do you think that you are truly called?” Review the circumstances of your own call.

POINT II.—*And they came unto Him.* God’s calls are never so overwhelming as to dispense with or override the freedom of the will. We have to rise up and respond to this call, and this not only at the beginning of our ministry, but continually day by day throughout its course.

POINT III.—Judas was called. It is therefore possible to fail, though really called, and though really responding at first. What need for holy fear and self-mistrust! Judas is a warning not to the “bad,” but to the “good.” There must have been that within him which justified the call of Christ. We are here in the presence of a great mystery. The power of the human will to mar God’s plans.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Gratitude for the Call: desire to respond more faithfully. Perseverance.

FEBRUARY 28.

Parable of the Seed growing secretly.

READ ST. MARK iv. 26-30.

So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the gradual growth of a seed to the mature fruit.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for tranquillity and evenness of spirit.

POINT I.—All growth is gradual and secret. We can see a plant *has* grown, but we never see it growing. The Christian growth in grace is gradual and secret. This warns us that we are not to expect to be saints in a hurry ; and also that the more secret our progress, probably the more sure it is.

POINT II.—*He knoweth not how.* The gardener puts in his seed : he does not know how it grows ; but he has no fuss or anxiety. He knows that it will grow. What a rebuke to our restlessness and want of repose ! Tranquillity, evenness of character, should be our aim. It is the foolish child who pulls up the plant to see how it grows.

POINT III.—This even tranquillity can only be acquired by learning to trust God more simply, just as the gardener trusts Him. This parable is only found in St. Mark's Gospel, and is the only one peculiar to him. Possibly he had learnt the truth which it indicates in his own life in a marked degree. He who had been so uncertain at first was matured quietly in later life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let this be a day of tranquillity and quiet rest in God.

FEBRUARY 29.

Criticism of Others.

READ ST. MATT. vii.

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

PRELUDE I.—Reflect on the harsh judgments you have passed on others.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from this sin.

POINT I.—*Judge not, that ye be not judged.* As we have been in our dealings with and judgments of others so will God be to us. Surely this thought should make us careful not to “judge” others. How about disparagement of others? If we are unkind to others, thoughtless, wanting in consideration, or even harsh! What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Why beholdest thou the mote?* Self-knowledge is what we should aim at, and this is as difficult as being able truly to judge our neighbour’s character. It is so easy to see the faults of others, so difficult to see our own. This thought should make us careful in self-examination and very tender towards others.

POINT III.—*First cast out the beam.* Here is the golden rule—to judge ourselves, to be sure of our motives and words and actions, and then in love we may help others. Charity must be the motive of our desire to correct others. Love others, and then they will allow us to help them.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve not to judge others. Pray for a heart of love.

MARCH 1.

The Gadarene Demoniac.

READ ST. MARK V. TO V. 21.

Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the man *sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind*, at the Feet of Jesus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be perfectly cleansed and healed by our Lord.

POINT I.—Contemplate the reality of demoniacal possession. The devil and his evil angels have a power over men, and are permitted to exercise it in various ways and for special purposes. Thus much is plain from Scripture. Do we think how real the unseen world is? We fight against *spiritual wickedness in high places*.

POINT II.—*When he saw Him, he ran and worshipped Him.* The personality of Satan alone accounts for some temptations to which we are subject. The only remedy is to flee to Christ, Who will deliver us. We need never consent with the will, however awful the temptation may be.

POINT III.—*In his right mind.* Our Lord casts out the evil spirit, and the man is cured. Sin is a madness. Passions indulged destroy the mind and the moral sense. The holy and clean man is also the sane man, who is master of his lower nature, and is therefore free. How is it with you?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Beware of trifling with the devil's assaults. Resist the beginnings of evil thoughts.

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter.

READ ST. MARK v. 21 TO END.

And straightway the damsel arose, and walked.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the miracle.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be raised up from sin, so that you may walk in newness of life.

POINT I.—*He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.* These three were alone with our Lord at the Transfiguration also, and in Gethsemane. He will have only a few round Him now, in order that He may avoid popularity and the applause of the crowd. It is in quietness and peace that God speaks to the soul and that we do our best work for Him.

POINT II.—*The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.* So He says elsewhere, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.* Death is only sleep when He is near, *i.e.* to the faithful Christian. (The only real death is the death of the soul.) Hence we call our graveyards cemeteries, *i.e.* sleeping-places. The body sleeps and awaits the Resurrection.

POINT II.—*He took her by the hand. . . . He commanded that something should be given her to eat.* Here is an instance of our Lord's compassion. The father had asked Him to lay His Hand upon her, and He does it, though it is not necessary. The body must be cared for, and in the excitement the parents might have forgotten it. Tender considerateness for the weakness of our mortal nature!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn to-day to think of the wonderful recollectedness of Jesus: never hurried!

The Mission of the Twelve.

READ ST. MARK vi. TO v. 14.

He began to send them forth by two and two.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord solemnly sending forth the Twelve.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn aright the lessons of the charge which He gave them.

POINT I.—*That they should take nothing for their journey.* This was to teach them entire trustfulness in God. Life is an increasing test of our trustfulness. We are to learn to be like children, looking up to God for food and raiment, for work, for opportunities. We are not to look for a general campaign in which to map out our life, but to go on trustfully from day to day.

POINT II.—*In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide.* After trustfulness comes contentment. There must be a determined effort to cut back ambition or self-seeking. We are not to wish our place to be other than what it is, except so far as it may be God's Will to change it. We are to learn faithfulness in the discharge of our duty.

POINT III.—*Preached that men should repent.* They preached repentance and healed the sick. So work for body and soul go hand-in-hand as in our Lord's Ministry. We get at men's souls by letting them see that we do care for their bodies also. Kindness and charitableness commend our message of repentance.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Contentment, faithfulness, charity.

Herod and St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. MARK vi. 14-30.

When he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Herod listening to St. John's preaching: *knowing that he was a just man and an holy.*

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage to obey conscience.

POINT I.—*It is John, whom I beheaded.* Here is a bad conscience. His cruel deed haunted him. Conscience was at work. So we trace the consequences of our own wrong-doings, and the sins of early life dog our steps. Herod's memory haunts him. Yet he might have turned this punishment into a penance. So may we.

POINT II.—*He did many things*, or “he was much perplexed.” This is before he beheads St. John. He was torn in two directions. There was his conscience leading him to “do many things” or to “be perplexed,” letting him see that all was not right with him; but he trifled with conscience. How is it with you?

POINT III.—His indecision was fatal, for ultimately he was swayed by circumstances. He beheaded St. John at the wish of a dancing girl! If we do not control circumstances, circumstances control us. The fear of man, moral cowardice! Think of the opportunity Herod had and how he lost it.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a clear conscience; decision.

The Storm on the Lake.

READ ST. MARK vi. 30 TO END.

The ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the disciples *toiling in rowing* ;
for the wind was contrary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may hold on to God in times of darkness and distress.

POINT I.—After the miracle our Lord had put His disciples into the boat, and He Himself had gone up into a mountain *to pray*. This is a picture of the life of those who have to lead others. Let them go home or go to rest, while we go apart to pray. Remember our Lord prays after a “successful” day—the feeding of the five thousand.

POINT II.—To test their faith He allows the storm to arise. So with the Church and with our individual lives. Storms come up against us and life seems terribly black and overcast. This is what we must expect from time to time: it is to try our faith. We must hold on bravely, and never give up our work or slacken our efforts.

POINT III.—*He alone on the land.* But He was *praying*. So now with us. Our Lord knows all that is going on—in the Church, the confusion in our lives, the want of success or response. So He tests our faith all through the night, maybe, for a long time; but at last He will come—*about the fourth watch of the night*, i.e. just before daybreak.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let to-day be a day of courage: if we can hold on till He comes, all is well.

MARCH 6.

Censoriousness.

READ ST. MARK vii. TO v. 24.

They found fault.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord teaching His disciples.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sincerity in heart and life.

POINT I.—*They found fault.* Censoriousness is a fault too common among persons professedly religious. We do well to remember our Lord's words, *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* One reason for this is that we know so little about the motives which govern our neighbour's actions. Yet how much of our conversation consists of shallow criticism of others !

POINT II.—*It is a Corban.* Our Lord's words to the Pharisees contain a warning about the paramount obligation of the Fifth Commandment. They taught that if a person merely *said* he had consecrated his goods to God, that this was a sufficient excuse for refusing to succour his parents. How about your duty at home ?

POINT III.—*Hear and understand.* Our Lord would have us use our *minds*. Can it be imagined that in the abstract it matters what you eat ? What really matters is what you let yourself think about. Nobody can be a good man unless he keeps a firm hand upon his heart and thoughts. It is there, in the heart, that pollution begins.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to look at your own heart and conduct, and to avoid censoriousness.

MARCH 7.

The Deaf and Dumb Man.

READ ST. MARK vii. 24 to viii. 10.

One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord taking the man aside.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that our Lord may cure you of your spiritual deafness and stammering.

POINT I.—The miracle is a parable of our Lord's dealings with us. We stammer in prayer because we are spiritually deaf to God's word. We do not hear Him speaking to us in the Bible, or in nature, or in our consciences. Reflect how much your slackness in prayer is due to your turning a deaf ear to God's voice.

POINT II.—*He took him aside from the multitude.* This must be the first stage in our cure. It is in solitude that we best hear God's voice. The world and its interests wrap themselves about us, and we cannot hear God; whereas we ought to let the thought of God enwrap us so that we may be deaf to the voice of the world. We must go aside and look up to God.

POINT III.—*Be opened.* He cures the man's deafness first, and then his tongue was loosed. So it is with us. Draw near to God and look up to Him in silence: then He will speak to you, and as you hear Him speaking, you will be able to speak to Him. Lord, open my deaf ears!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to listen to God's voice more faithfully.

MARCH 8.

The Value of the Soul.

READ ST. MARK viii. 10 TO ix. 2.

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

PRELUDE I.—Think what an influence this text has had in the lives of some of the greatest saints.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to aim at living a saintly life.

POINT I.—*Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself.* It is self-seeking which spoils our life very often. It is because we do not look upon self-denial as an ordinary duty that we get self-absorbed and self-assertive. It is this intrusion of self which makes us proud and impatient and difficult to work with. This ogre of self must be cast out.

POINT II.—*Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.* If we rest in this life, finding our satisfaction here and neglecting God and prayer, then assuredly we are losing our true life. The animal life is not man's real life. If we live in this world it is that we may fit ourselves for the next world. We die to the lower in order to live to the higher.

POINT III.—*Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, . . . the same shall save it.* This is exemplified in the lives of martyrs, missionaries, religious, every day. Put your life alongside of theirs, and see how it looks! How full of selfish ease! What real sacrifice have you ever made *for My sake and the Gospel's?* What sacrifice suggested by conscience have you refused?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Offer your life to God: be obedient to His inspirations.

MARCH 9.

The Lunatic Child.

READ ST. MARK ix. 2-30.

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene as our Lord descends from the Mount of Transfiguration.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more power to pray.

POINT I.—Meditate on the contrast—Jesus on the Mount in the calmness of prayer, the lunatic child, the afflicted father, and the helpless disciples below. It is a parable of life. We go up to the mountain-top in prayer, and then in the strength and calmness which prayer brings we go down to face the difficulties of life. Does prayer bring you this power?

POINT II.—*If thou canst believe.* Our difficulties would be less felt if we had more faith in God. Everything that comes to us is either sent by or allowed by God. This thought should keep us calm. We have quietly to go on doing our best, and leave results in His hands. *Help Thou mine unbelief.*

POINT III.—*This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*¹ Prayer increases our faith, and so increases our spiritual power. It is when we are much in prayer that we best learn the secrets of the spiritual world. Are you learning to be a man of prayer? Nothing else is so well worth learning as this. Meditate on the power of prayer, and bring your difficulties to God in prayer.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more prayerful.

¹ *Fasting* is not perhaps part of the true text.

MARCH 10.

Cutting off the Right Hand.

READ ST. MARK ix. 30 TO END.

If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the many times you have dallied with temptation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be courageous in avoiding occasions of sin.

POINT I.—It is part of the discipline of life to have to deny ourselves things that may in the abstract be “lawful,” but which for us are an occasion of sin. Some may safely do what others cannot do. Some may safely go where others cannot. Every one should realize his own special dangers, and avoid occasions of sin.

POINT II.—*Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.* Fire is for purgation. All the trials and temptations of life are intended to purge away the dross from our characters. If we will let Him, God will in this way purge out our pride and self-seeking, our impatience and fretfulness.

POINT III.—Salt is a symbol of incorruption. We cannot offer ourselves to God unless we are striving to purge ourselves from sin—first the “purgative” way, then (as conscience is increasingly obeyed) the “illuminative” way, and finally the “unitive.” What is incorruptible remains in union with God, which is everlasting life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Sincerity of aim, simplicity, is the salt of character.

MARCH 11.

Detachment.

READ ST. MARK x. TO v. 32.

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the rich young man refusing Christ's call.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be detached from the love of this world.

POINT I.—Our Lord always speaks of riches as being dangerous. The reason is that they are so apt to absorb our interest in the present, that we forget that here we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Where our treasure is, there our heart will be. Where is your treasure?

POINT II.—*Lo, we have left all.* Here St. Peter asks about himself and the other Apostles; they had left all. Our Lord will not be outdone in generosity. There is such a call as the call to the "religious" life, to leave all and follow Christ. If the call comes we must rise up to it, for indeed it is an evidence of God's wonderful love. He will claim our all in a special sense.

POINT III.—For all there must be detachment in heart and spirit from this world and all that it can offer. God and His Holy Will—this is the aim to set before us, and this aim steadily pursued will bring comfort and peace to the soul.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray that you may never fall short of the vocation to which God calls you.

Ambition.

READ ST. MARK x. 32 TO END.

It shall not be so among you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two Apostles asking to sit on the right hand, and on the left.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to check all wrong ambition.

POINT I.—Is there a right ambition? Surely the forward-reaching, upward-looking tendency in man is God-given. A man must have ideals. A “man of low aims or of no aims is not a man.” Wrong comes in when self is made the end of our aims and efforts. Self must be dethroned.

POINT II.—What, then, is right ambition? Surely ambition is right when the aim is God and God’s Will? It is a right ambition to “make the best of ourselves” to the greater glory of God. We glorify God by using our gifts, not by burying them. To be a thorough mechanic or a thorough teacher is a right and noble ambition.

POINT III.—Right ambition involves service and suffering. Baptism and the cup will come to us—the baptism of service and the cup of suffering. This is what the Apostles had to learn—no aiming at personal pre-eminence as such.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be ambitious to be all that God would have you be.

MARCH 13.

The Fig-tree a Lesson of Faith.

READ ST. MARK xi. TO v. 27.

Have faith in God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles with our Lord looking at the withered fig-tree.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater faith.

POINT I.—The lesson our Lord draws from the withered fig-tree is the need of faith and the power of faith. He points out that if we had faith we could remove mountains. “However beset our path may be, God can clear it; whatever happens do not wrong His Providence.” We wrong God when we doubt His love.

POINT II.—*Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* Believe that God will really answer prayers, though not always in our way. So we need to add, “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,” and “For Thy glory, not for my own exaltation,” and “In Thine own good time when Thou knowest it to be best.”

POINT III.—Meditate on your own prayers. How much real faith is there in them? Take God at His word. Ask Him simply. Pray to Him as a child speaks to a loving parent. Put your case in His hands. Look up to Him for guidance. He will not mock your cry; but be restful in His love.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more full of faith in your prayers.

The Unity of Truth.

READ ST. MARK xi. 27 TO xii. 13.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the chief priests and elders trying to entrap our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not be afraid to follow where truth leads you.

POINT I.—The point was, they were afraid to admit that the baptism of John was from heaven, because to have acknowledged John to be a prophet would have involved them in acknowledging our Lord. Often people will not admit a truth to be true for fear of what will follow. If I believe, for example, in the power of Absolution, my conscience may urge me to use Confession.

POINT II.—It is important to have clear views as to our belief and our duty: not to give way to the temptation to go through life with a mind unsettled as to what religion involves and what duties it demands. Yet how many there are who do not take pains enough about such matters! What says conscience?

POINT III.—If John was a prophet, he had definitely settled what the authority of Jesus Christ was; but the priests were afraid to admit it. Oh, that we were not so often in danger of telling lies out of fear or shame! Fear God, and you need fear no one else. God is Truth, and He cannot lead you astray or play you false.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn to desire to be always truthful in your life and in religion.

MARCH 15.

The First Commandment.

READ ST. MARK xii. 13-35.

Which is the first commandment of all?

PRELUDE I.—Think of the scribe coming to our Lord and asking this question sincerely.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of God.

POINT I.—Our Lord in answering gives no new commandment; He does but emphasize the old commandment in the Law. It is to love God above everything. Are you learning this first commandment? Is there anything, or any person, or any plan, which you love more than you love God?

POINT II.—*With all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* The heart was made for God. Are you giving it to God? The soul is the sum-total of all the faculties we have. We ought to take stock of ourselves, and see how best we may lay out our lives for the glory of God.

POINT III.—*With all thy mind, and with all thy strength.* How often do you think of God? What do you think of when, as you say, you are thinking of nothing in particular? We should watch the tendency and bent of our minds, and try to train them to find God everywhere. God's presence is round about us at all times, yet how seldom we think of Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to think of God more and to love God better.

Endurance.

READ ST. MARK xiii. TO v. 14.

He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord on the Mount of Olives warning His disciples of impending troubles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage to face the difficulties of life.

POINT I.—In this discourse the overthrow and desolation of Jerusalem is mingled with the thought of that of which it was the symbol and type—the final catastrophe at the end of the world. Wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes and pestilences, are to remind us of this final and overwhelming catastrophe. Do you look thus on political events?

POINT II.—Endurance must rest upon complete trust and confidence in the power and love of God—that He has a plan for our lives, that He will never fail us if we are true to Him, that He will never call upon us to bear more than He gives us strength for. What a promise is that: *For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*

POINT III.—Endurance is passive and active. It is passive, for it means bearing trials and temptations; active, for it means that we must resolve at all costs to *go on*—to do what God has given us to do, to persevere. This can only be through prayer and effort rising up to the requirements of God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Perseverance.

“Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear;
And, dear Lord, the chiefest,
Grace to persevere.”

MARCH 17.

Watchfulness.

READ ST. MARK xiii. 14 TO END.

Take ye heed, watch and pray.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord speaking these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be obedient.

POINT I.—*Take ye heed*, etc. The world round about us is so careless about the coming of Christ, and we who love Him are in great danger of being caught up into the atmosphere of this general widespread carelessness. Yet, in reality, nothing is more important than that we should be ready when He comes, and that we should really *desire* His coming.

POINT II.—*Pray*. We watch best by keeping ourselves in an attitude of prayerfulness. This ought to be possible even in a busy life. Brother Lawrence schooled himself to think of God amid the humble work of the kitchen. Thus to think of God is to pray.

POINT III.—*He gave to every man his work*. God has given each of us a work to do, a vocation to follow out. The blessed thing will be to be found, when He comes, doing what He has set us to do—doing it prayerfully and watchfully. Oh, may we be so occupied when He comes! What joy will be ours! Avoid carelessness, self-will, indolence, prayerlessness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be watchful.

MARCH 18.

The Alabaster Box of Ointment.

READ ST. MARK xiv. TO v. 27.

She hath done what she could.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene in the house of Simon the leper as He sat at meat.

PRELUDE II.—Pray rightly to understand this Scripture.

POINT I.—The ointment was very costly. Three hundred pence would be equivalent to about £15, which, of course, possessed then a much greater purchasing power than the same sum nowadays. Clearly, then, in this passage our Lord sanctions the outlay of great wealth for the adornment of buildings, etc., erected to His glory. *She hath wrought a good work on Me.*

POINT II.—It was Judas who took the lead in objecting, and that, not from a sincere motive, *but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*¹ But even had the objection been sincere our Lord overrules it. There is a time for everything, and there are occasions when to lay out large sums in building or beautifying churches is right.

POINT III.—*Ye have the poor with you always.* Our Lord would be the last to think lightly of the duty of active charity; and it is well to ask ourselves how we are fulfilling this duty? What proportion of our money do we give away in alms? Do we give in church regularly? Ought I to keep account more strictly?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try to give something whenever you are asked for a good cause.

¹ St. John xii. 6.

Gethsemane.

READ ST. MARK xiv. 27-53.

He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord in the garden with the three Apostles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage in the dark hours of life.

POINT I.—Fear and pain filled the human soul of our Blessed Lord. He longed for more sympathy, but even the three disciples slept. We are to learn from this terrible scene not to be surprised if we too have our share of dark days. Why, indeed, should they not come to *us*, seeing that the sinless One endured such a day of darkness? Desolation of soul! To feel this at times is part of the lot of men.

POINT II.—*Father, . . . take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.* In the first part of this cry we have the wish, the human wish, that obedience might be compatible with absence of suffering. The second part proves that there was no wish, there *could* be no wish, in the human heart of our Lord to escape from obedience itself. No rebellion! Ponder this mystery.

POINT III.—Note the effect of His prayer. It renders Him calm and collected. He goes to His disciples—*Rise up, let us go.* He goes forth in calm majesty to meet His foes—*Whom seek ye?* Here is the effect of true prayer. It gives calmness to face all dangers. It was St. Francis de Sales who said that we should always rise from our prayers with feelings of confidence and hope.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—“O Lord, in Thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.”

MARCH 20.

The Face of Jesus.

READ ST. MARK xiv. 53 TO END.

Some began to spit on Him, and to cover His Face.

PRELUDE I.—Think of this mocking of Jesus in the presence of the high priest.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to make some reparation for all this in the reverence of your life.

POINT I.—St. Matthew tells us *they spit in His Face*. It is impossible to think of this without a feeling of shame and horror—that Face, Whose splendour illuminates the Throne of God ; that Face, which angels bow before ; that Face, which we shall see at the Day of Judgment. What insults have I ever endured in any way comparable to this mocking ?

POINT II.—We are to learn from this extreme indignity the lesson to be patient under provocation and insult. Think of the marvellous patience and dignity of our Lord under this coarse treatment ! Do you ever resent and “pay back ” an injury ? If so, are you really a disciple of Jesus ?

POINT III.—In some countries the people say a litany of “reparation to the sacred Face of Jesus.” Think of the blasphemies which every day and night go up to heaven. Learn to pray for sinners and to increase your sense of sorrow for sin by great care, lest in your thoughts or words you should join in the mockery of your Lord.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of the compassionate Face of our Divine Master.

MARCH 21.

The Dereliction on the Cross.

READ ST. MARK xv. TO v. 42.

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord suffering His human soul to be bereft of the consciousness of the Divine Presence.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for support in despondency.

POINT I.—This mysterious cry illustrates, first of all, the separation from God which sin implies. *He was made sin for us.* Sin causes a necessary alienation between us and God. We cannot have God *and* our sins. We must give up all love of sin if we are to live with God; to un-will every sin if we are to love God and be with God for ever and ever.

POINT II.—This cry also seems to show that our Lord entered into the distressed cry of the servant of God in every age. He entered into and *expressed His sympathy with* every problem and perplexity which can vex human life—the great moral difficulties which surround us; the perplexity of social problems; the expostulations of psalmist and prophet as they see the moral chaos round about them.

POINT III.—Yet this cry does not solve all these difficulties. Rather our Lord would have us live under this discipline of ignorance, or would teach us that this is our lot here below. We must in all difficulties hold on to God by acts of faith, hope, and love. He is still *My God* amid whatever perplexities.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Face the hours of despondency which may be before you, and learn to trust God more and more.

MARCH 22.

The Ascension.

READ ST. MARK xvi.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Ascension.

PRELUDE II.—Say the Collect for Ascension Day.

POINT I.—St. Mark alone gives the detail, *and sat on the right hand of God*. Our Lord's Body is "naturally" in heaven, at the *right hand of God*. St. Stephen saw Him *standing at the right hand of God*. The phrase denotes the place of highest beatitude and of supreme power. There He is, preparing a place for us, making intercession for us. Am I preparing myself for that place?

POINT II.—In Him human nature is exalted to the Throne of God. He is "God from everlasting"; He is also "Man for evermore." Human nature is indissolubly linked with the Divine Nature in the Person of God the Son. He came to raise us to this great dignity. How sacred a thing must human nature be, seeing it has been assumed and is worn by God!

POINT III.—It is because our Lord's Humanity is thus real and permanent that we can receive Him sacramentally in the Eucharist. It is because His Flesh is the "Flesh of God," and therefore life-giving, that the Sacrament is so divine a thing. It has the power to cleanse and purify us, lifting up our affections to God and the things of God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL. — Examine your heart and thoughts, and pray that you may draw nearer to God.

MARCH 23.

The Vision of Zacharias.

READ ST. LUKE i. TO v. 26.

His lot was to burn incense.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Zacharias in the holy place offering incense.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater power in prayer.

POINT I.—To burn incense thus solemnly in the holy place only came to a priest once in his lifetime. Zacharias was now an old man, yet never, so far, had the lot fallen to him. Now it had come. Consider how the prayers of a lifetime are gathered up in the solemn moment when he places the incense on the altar ! He had longed so many years for a son !

POINT II.—His prayer is at last answered ; the news overwhelms him and his faith fails. Yet God is so merciful : He does not withdraw His promise, though He punishes Zacharias. Let me learn to believe more in the power of prayer. Our Lord has so plainly told us to believe that we shall receive what we pray for.

POINT III.—And what an answer it was ! How far exceeding anything that he had dreamt of ! The child, sanctified before birth, was to be the Forerunner of the Messiah ! So God gives us more than we ask or think ! What an encouragement to persevere in prayer ! Review your habit in this respect.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think whether you cannot give more time to prayer.

MARCH 24.

The Incarnation.

READ ST. LUKE i. 26-46.

Wherefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Angel addressing Mary.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to “believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

POINT I.—In Christ humanity makes a fresh start. By the Virgin-Birth the entail of original sin is cut off. Christ is the new Head of the human race: He is the Second Adam gathering up humanity into Himself: He is the Head of a new Family—the Church of God.

POINT II.—There must, then, be a real incorporation into Christ in order that we may partake of His supernatural life. By Baptism we are joined to Him as His members, and we have life derived into us as from the vine-stock the life or sap flows out to the branch. Intimate spiritual union with the Second Adam is the result of our new Birth. Fresh stores of life come to us in Holy Communion.

POINT III.—If we would profit by this gift of new life we must co-operate with our will. The tree is known by his fruit. We must live in the spirit of our forefather Christ and not boast of our pedigree! What shall sacraments profit us unless we are striving to live as He would have us live?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to realize your responsibilities better.

MARCH 25.

The Magnificat.

READ ST. LUKE i. 46-57.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Mary singing her Magnificat.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for deeper insight into the mystery of the Incarnation.

POINT I.—The mystery of the Incarnation involves the bruising of the serpent's head. Humanity starts afresh in the Child of Mary Who is the Lord from Heaven. It implies also the union between God and man. He unites both Natures in His own Divine Person and lives a perfect life as man, dying in our nature to save us from eternal death. The Incarnation is thus the greatest of all God's works.

POINT II.—Consider Mary's share in this mystery. She was indeed "highly favoured," or *endued with grace*, who had been chosen to this great dignity. Every Jewish woman looked forward to being the mother of the Messiah, and in Mary's conception were fulfilled the highest hopes of every true Israelite. "We cannot bear too reverent a regard unto the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself" (Pearson).

POINT III.—That Mary ever remained a Virgin is "according to the tradition of the Fathers, and the constant doctrine of the Church. . . . The Church of God in all ages has believed that she still continued in the same virginity, and therefore is to be acknowledged the *Ever Virgin Mary*" (Pearson). Humility and purity are the characteristic graces of Mary.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say often the Collect for to-day. "It is a Creed in miniature" (Liddon).

MARCH 26.

The Shepherds.

READ ST. LUKE ii. TO v. 21.

There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the gift of more spiritual joy.

POINT I.—The shepherds were the first to hear of the Nativity. This fact stamps the Gospel as, in the first place, a Gospel for the poor, even as poverty and poverty of spirit are the first Beatitudes. The first disciples were from the poor. The Gospel gradually won its way upward. No one, in fact, can feel the need of Christianity unless he is aiming at poverty of spirit.

POINT II.—*Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.* The Gospel is a message, not of sorrow but of joy. It is the news of the barrier between God and man being broken down. We misrepresent Christianity when we let people think it is a religion of gloom. The early Christians, for all their sufferings, were *full of joy and of the Holy Ghost.*

POINT III.—*They made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.* Notice this: the shepherds did not keep the good news to themselves; they were evangelists to others. We must all be missionaries, either for God or for His enemies. Joy is contagious, and for this reason, if for no other, we must realize the need of a joyous temperament.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to aim more consistently at making others happy.

MARCH 27.

Our Lord in the Temple.

READ ST. LUKE ii. 21 TO END.

Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene in the Temple.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn a lesson of devotion from the example of the Child Jesus.

POINT I.—*Wist ye not*, etc. It is the one word which breaks the long silence of the thirty years! Not another word of His is recorded through all that period! There must, therefore, be some special value attaching to all this incident. The main lesson, surely, is that duty to God comes first in our lives, and we must not let even the Fifth Commandment interfere with our duty to Him.

POINT II.—This fact is a warning to parents. We are not to leave the teaching of religion till the child is "old enough to decide for himself." This is like leaving a garden uncared for, and then wondering when it gets full of weeds. How do you recognize your responsibility to your children or god-children in this respect?

POINT III.—*He went down . . . to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.* The silence again closes over Jesus for eighteen years. All we learn is that He was obedient. But how much this is to learn! Are you fretful at home, and irritable and dissatisfied? Think of Jesus at Nazareth. See how wonderfully he combines the keeping of the First and the Fifth Commandments.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to follow our Lord's example.

MARCH 28.

The Preaching of St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. LUKE iii. TO v. 23.

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the crowds coming to St. John's Baptism.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to make true amendment for past wrong-doing.

POINT I.—He addresses first the self-righteous. *Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, etc.* There is a danger for Church-people and Catholics lest they should rest on external privileges. “No use to trace the Apostolic descent of our ministry unless we are striving to live in the spirit of our Forefather Christ.”¹ The greater the privilege the more searching will be the scrutiny in the day of *the wrath to come!*

POINT II.—To the people, the publicans and the soldiers, He gives the counsel to avoid the sins most characteristic of their profession or circumstances. The giving of two coats is applicable to all times, and is a rebuke to selfish disregard of the poor. The publicans and soldiers *could* serve God in their different callings. How tender and considerate is this advice! God looks not at our employment, but at our *character*.

POINT III.—*One mightier than I cometh.* St. John points away from himself on to Christ—a model for all teachers and workers. *We preach not ourselves.* Beware of drawing attention to yourself. Simply point to our Lord. How is it with you?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for true amendment. Be disinterested.

¹ Rev. R. M. Benson.

MARCH 29.

The Temptation of our Lord.

READ ST. LUKE iv. TO V. 16.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord enduring temptation for our sakes.

PRELUDE II.—Pray, By Thy Temptation, good Lord, deliver us.

POINT I.—He was led by the Spirit, *i.e.* the Holy Spirit. Temptation, then, is not necessarily evil; it is not sin. It is allowed, permitted by God. We may at any time be led thus into the wilderness of temptation. Temptations must never be of our own seeking: that would be presumptuous. So we pray, Lead us not into temptation, *i.e.* keep us from wilfully running into temptation.

POINT II.—One use of temptation is to test us. How do I know that I can be patient unless I am sometimes tempted to impatience? How can I strive after humility unless I am sometimes tempted to pride? Temptation, therefore, seems necessary for the growth and development of character.

POINT III.—Hence regard temptations as *opportunities* for gaining fresh virtues. So long as we do not run into temptation God will never allow us to be tempted above our strength; consequently, if we *resist the devil*, we know that he *will flee from us*. He goes, however, only *for a season*; he will return. Watch.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.* Courage.

MARCH 30.

Our Lord in the Synagogue at Nazareth.

READ ST. LUKE iv. 16 TO END.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord reading in the synagogue.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the guidance of the Spirit in everything.

POINT I.—*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. . . . This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.* All our Lord's actions as Man were directed and guided by the Holy Ghost. He was led *by the Spirit* into the wilderness for the Temptation. He cast out devils *by the Spirit of God*. So throughout His life. Our lives will be what they ought to be in proportion as we are thus guided.

POINT II.—*To preach the Gospel to the poor, . . . to heal the brokenhearted, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised.* This is what the Gospel does. It appeals to the poor and the poor in spirit, to those who are striving to be childlike and humble. It cannot appeal to those who are satisfied with anything this world can give. *He hath filled the hungry.* What says conscience?

POINT III.—They rejected Him, and cast Him out of Nazareth. Why? Because He would not work miracles among them. They had no faith; they were not poor in spirit. They were proud and self-satisfied, and cast Him out. Do not be distressed overmuch if your message is sometimes scorned.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to act always submissively under God's guiding Hand.

MARCH 31.

The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

READ ST. LUKE v. TO v. 17.

Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage to make fresh beginnings.

POINT I.—The disciples had *toiled all night, and taken nothing*. They had listened for hours to the teaching of Jesus as He sat in the boat, and now He breaks the spell, and they think again of their disappointment. Seeming failure is one of God's ways of teaching us to trust Him more. Trustful obedience to God's word "transforms disappointment into hope, failure into success."

POINT II.—We need perseverance in the spiritual life. As we look back on a year or two of life can we say we have made any steady progress? Often we must needs say, *We have toiled all night, and taken nothing*. Are we ready then cheerfully to begin again? There is no failure but that of ceasing to try. *At Thy word.*

POINT III.—We need perseverance in our active work. We get depressed and out of heart. *We have toiled all night, and taken nothing*. Perhaps there has been too much of "self" in our work; perhaps we have not been wholly disinterested; and so we have to begin again in more complete and humble and patient reliance upon God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make a fresh beginning.

APRIL 1.

Fasting.

READ ST. LUKE V. 17 TO END.

Then shall they fast in those days.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Jesus sitting at meat in Levi's house.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your hours of social intercourse may be blessed.

POINT I.—Our Lord came eating and drinking, and this was made a subject of reproach. In His "feasting," however, He always kept before Him the aim of winning souls, of bringing sinners to repentance. It seems to be a duty before going into society for Christians to pray that God may bless our words and actions. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Then shall they fast.* If it is a duty sometimes to feast, it is certainly a duty sometimes to fast. Fasting is a sign of sorrow for sin: as the body has sinned, so the body must do penance. So from very early times Friday has been set apart for fasting or abstinence as being the special day when the "Bridegroom was taken away." How about your Fridays?

POINT III.—Another object in fasting is to make the body apt and meet for spiritual things, so fasting prepares for a festival, *e.g.* Lent for Easter, Friday for Sunday, Vigils for Holy Days. This reminds us that fasting and prayer go hand-in-hand. When you fast always pray God to bless your fasting.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to follow more faithfully the example of Jesus in fasting and feasting.

Prayer.

READ ST. LUKE vi. TO v. 20.

He continued all night in prayer to God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord spending the whole night in prayer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in prayer.

POINT I.—Here we have a justification for setting apart certain times for prolonged prayer, as *e.g.* times of Retreat. It needs great resolution to do this in the midst of a busy life, but we have our Example, and the duty is clear. What says conscience? Do you know anything of prolonged prayer? Yet all the saints practised it.

POINT II.—Our Lord *continued all night in prayer to God* in preparation for His calling the twelve Apostles. Here we have His example for prolonged prayer before the great epochs in life, *e.g.* marriage, ordination, change of work. It is much to be wished that we would not limit ourselves to the conventional “twice a day” for prayer.

POINT III.—*He continued all night.* “Meditation” is mental prayer. It is not simply reading the Bible; rather it is praying off the Bible. Let me learn thus to pray during my meditations, so shall I be following the example of the saints. Let me aspire to be, first of all, a man (or woman) of prayer.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let me grow more in the habit of prayer and habitual intercourse with God.

APRIL 3.

The Gospel Woes.

READ ST. LUKE vi. 20 TO END.

Woe unto you that are rich!

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord condemning the temper of mind which rests in worldly prosperity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be ever looking forward to the joy which is beyond this world.

POINT I.—*For ye have received your consolation.* These words give us the key to our Lord's meaning. He means "Ye have all that ye care for, and have it to the full." It is the same expression as that used of the Pharisees, "They have their reward." We have what we lay ourselves out to have. But woe to us if we find our satisfaction in the enjoyment of earthly prosperity! The soul was made for God.

POINT II.—*Woe unto you that are full! . . . you that laugh.* It is worldliness again which is condemned. To find full satisfaction in "plenty" or in mirth is to betray a temper entirely non-Christian. How we need to remember this in a day when men are manifestly "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"! Remember the awful words to Dives: *Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.*¹

POINT III.—The sin of worldliness, or covetousness, or avarice may creep upon us in middle or later life, when the more generous impulses of early life die down, and we need to be on our guard. The Christian temper is the thing to aim at, and "poverty of spirit" is its first note.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember the Christian ideal of life—quiet, humble love of God and of man for God's sake.

¹ St. Luke xvi. 25.

APRIL 4.

The Raising of the Widow's Son.

READ ST. LUKE vii. TO v. 24.

There was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be ready always to comfort the mourners.

POINT I.—This miracle is related by St. Luke alone. Three miracles of raising from the dead are recorded in the Gospels—the daughter of Jairus, who was just dead ; this widow's son, who was on his way to burial ; Lazarus, who had been four days dead. Our Lord is powerful to heal those who are “dead in trespasses and sins,” whether they have been thus for a longer or shorter time !

POINT II.—*He had compassion on her.* Notice our Lord's true human sympathy with human suffering. Realize that our Lord is never indifferent to your sufferings or to those of others. He is always ready to *have compassion.* Let us learn to turn to Him first of all in all our griefs.

POINT III.—*Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* Here is the word of power ! Think of the joy of the widowed mother ; and then think how real His miracles are now when He says to the dead in sins, *I say unto thee, Arise.* What, says conscience, are you asleep in sin or lapsing from your high ideals ? If so, His call should wake you.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for those who have lapsed after Confirmation, or Confession, or Communion.

APRIL 5.

Love, the Fruit of Penitence.

READ ST. LUKE vii. 24 TO END.

She loved much.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene in the Pharisee's house.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may show the reality of your penitence by your love.

POINT I.—The Pharisee, while he condemned the poor woman, had omitted to show the ordinary courtesies of life to our Lord—no water for the feet, no kiss of welcome, no oil. This was a proof of how little sense of penitence he had, how little love. When forgiven, do you think how much you can do in return to our Lord ?

POINT II.—The parable of the two debtors makes it plain that this is the lesson our Lord would teach. The more vivid our sense of the forgiveness of sin, the more sincere will be our love to Christ. How often do we take forgiveness as a matter of course, and forget the water, the kiss, the oil ! Christ says nothing, but He notices all !

POINT III.—*Her sins are forgiven*, or “have been forgiven.” Forgiveness is immediate, but remember that new sins destroy penitence. Penitence is a state, and the faith that justifies is a faith which worketh by love. How do you habitually look on our Lord ? Are you growing in the sense of personal love to Him ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Associate yourself with this poor woman in her penitential love.

APRIL 6.

Jesus Asleep in the Storm.

READ ST. LUKE viii. TO V. 26.

As they sailed He fell asleep.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene of our Lord asleep in the boat.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for an increase of faith.

POINT I.—Think of this evidence of our Lord's true humanity. He was really tired, and really sleeping from fatigue. What a restful thought is this—I may take rest in the midst of perils, being certain of His protecting care. It is a rebuke to our incessant worry and restlessness. *Be still then, and know that I am God.*

POINT II.—But it is a parable also. The ship is the Church, and our Lord seems at times to be asleep. It is then that we feel He is testing our faith. We must expect our faith to be put to the proof. It was here that the disciples failed. How I need to remember this in days of "crisis"!

POINT III.—*There was a calm.* Wherever He is there should be calm. It is only our want of faith which makes it seem otherwise. *God is in the midst of her.* But are we working and praying and leading lives of humble obedience? If so, we may take courage. But there must be no boasting on the one hand or faint-heartedness on the other.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say to-day the twenty-third Psalm as an act of faith and trustfulness.

APRIL 7.

The Woman with the Issue of Blood.

READ ST. LUKE viii. 26 TO END.

Immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a right belief in the means of grace.

POINT I.—The poor woman may be taken to represent fallen human nature, conscious of its sin and misery, and of its inability to raise itself from its miserable condition. The “physicians” are the philosophers of earth, who could recognize the evil, but had no power to cure or to eradicate it. No human philosophy has been able permanently to raise human nature.

POINT II.—Human nature has to come in contact with the Humanity of the Second Adam. This is what differentiates Christian ethics from every other scheme of ethics. Christianity insists on the need of a new life-germ, a new birth, incorporation into Christ; on the need of supernatural Divine help, *i.e.* grace.

POINT III.—The hem of the garment represents the means of grace—the Sacraments. Learn to realize more fully that the Church is the storehouse of Divine grace, that it is through the Sacraments that Christ dispenses to His members that original and saving grace which comes from His God-united Humanity.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Associate yourself with the poor woman, and learn to lean more completely on Jesus.

APRIL 8.

The Value of the Soul.

READ ST. LUKE ix. TO v. 28.

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord setting this precept out as the standard of a true life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may follow it according to the truth of your vocation.

POINT I.—Self-denial is a principle of a true Christian life. It is the opposite of self-pleasing. Not “what I like” but “what I ought” becomes the guiding question of life. This must be looked upon not as a law of restriction, but as the true “law of liberty,” since duty is ordained by a *God of love*.

POINT II.—Man is threefold—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. v. 23). The “soul” is the connecting link between the other two; “to be bent on saving this in its relation to the body, is to lose it in relation to the higher life of the spirit. To be content to part with it in its lower aspect, is to gain it back again in the higher” (Ellicot).

POINT III.—*What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?* Herein lies the deep significance of life. For what are we working? For self or for God? For time or for eternity? The value of the soul cannot be measured by anything that this world can give. Oh that I might remember this!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Look up to God for guidance. Deny yourself. Go on humbly with your work.

APRIL 9.

The Transfiguration.

READ ST. LUKE ix. 28-51.

This is My beloved Son : hear Him.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn aright the lessons of this great mystery.

POINT I.—*As He was praying.* St. Luke alone tells us that our Lord was praying. As at His Baptism so at His Transfiguration—He prays. What an encouragement this should be to us to persevere in prayer, feeling assured of the blessings it will bring ! While others sleep or are idle, we may sometimes pray. How is it with you ?

POINT II.—*And spake of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.* St. Luke alone tells us the subject of His conversation with Moses and Elijah. The Law and the Prophets were passing away ; but Christ and His teaching remain for ever. His *Exodus* was but the final step to His glorification, of which this Transfiguration was the foretaste. Calvary, the Resurrection, and the Ascension were all spread out before Him.

POINT III.—This was the only moment, so far as we know, in His earthly life where the Godhead shone through the veil of Manhood. On the mount of prayer and Communion we are nearest to God. We come down with fresh energy and courage to meet the difficulties of life. The difficulties remain, but we meet them in a new power.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Treasure in your memory this scene, and remember the prevailing power of prayer.

APRIL 10.

The Service of Christ.

READ ST. LUKE ix. 51 TO x. 19.

Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord's claim on your life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray not to fall short of the vocation to which He calls you.

POINT I.—Three men, representing three types of character, are set before us. The first is the sanguine temperament: *Lord, I will follow Thee*; but our Lord's reply shows that he had not weighed his words, *The foxes have holes*, etc. Our Lord would say, "Count the cost, think what it means really to follow Me. Don't let your words outstrip your efforts. Reflect what it means to be a Christian."

POINT II.—The second one He calls, *Follow Me*. This one represents the melancholic temperament: *Suffer me first to go and bury my father*. But our Lord's claim will brook no delay. There are times when His claim overrides all other claims, even those of natural piety. He alone Who knows the hearts of all can call like that!

POINT III.—The third one offers himself, but makes conditions, and he is told that no man, who has once put his hand to the plough, and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Ask yourself, Are you holding anything back from God? Is your service whole-hearted? Is covetousness creeping in? or fear? or faint-heartedness?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day what Christ's service demands of *you*; and pray not to fall short of His call and purpose.

APRIL 11.

The Good Samaritan.

READ ST. LUKE x. 17 TO END.

Go, and do thou likewise.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the story.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for forgiveness for past neglect of others in distress.

POINT I.—It is to be much observed that whereas the lawyer had asked, “Who is my neighbour?” our Lord shows him by this parable that the question ought always to be, “To whom can I show myself a neighbour?” This is involved in the question, *Which now was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The first lesson, then, is to be on the look-out for doing kindnesses. What says conscience?

POINT II.—The next thing to reflect upon is the *personal trouble* which the Samaritan took over this case. He did not help him by proxy. He bound up his wounds, he set him on his own beast (while he himself walked), he nursed him one night himself, and he made provision for all further expenses. To give up time, expense, and to put forth personal effort in relieving distress is a duty!

POINT III.—Meditate on its parabolic significance. Christ is the Good Samaritan: He alone can heal human nature (while the Law and the Prophets can but recognize the evil), He cleanses and restores, He brings men into His Church, and gives them the Word and Sacraments! What a picture all this is of what He has done for your soul and mine!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make more effort in relieving the distressed.

APRIL 12.

Importunity in Prayer.

READ ST. LUKE xi. TO V. 29.

Ask, and it shall be given you.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the parable of the “Friend at Midnight.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for power to persevere in prayer.

POINT I.—*Because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.* By such a bold metaphor does our Lord encourage us to persevere in prayer! We do not sufficiently expect an answer to our prayers; hence we are so soon tired. Believe that God will answer unselfish prayer. Put more expectancy into your prayers.

POINT II.—*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, etc.* What can be plainer or more encouraging than our Lord’s teaching here? God is our Father; He is more willing and better able than an earthly parent to give “good things,” or the “Holy Spirit,” to those who ask. Take Christ at His word, and approach God as your Father.

POINT III.—God’s Name, God’s Kingdom, God’s Will—these are the first considerations in prayer. So we are taught by the Lord’s Prayer. All our prayers, then, must be for the greater glory of God, and then sooner or later God will certainly answer them.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Renew your efforts in prayer for yourself and others.

APRIL 13.

Sincerity of Aim.

READ ST. LUKE xi. 29 TO END.

When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord rebuking the people for seeking after a sign.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to live with a single eye to God's glory.

POINT I.—The “ seeking after a sign ” indicates want of faith. We have to remember that here we walk by faith, not by sight. God, indeed, gives us signs ; history provides them—Jonah and the Queen of Sheba are thus signs. But the unconverted heart will not recognize the finger of God even in Christ's presence and ministry. Do you not need to strengthen your own faith ?

POINT II.—*The light of the body is the eye.* What is the aim of your life ? If it is a simple desire to do God's Will and to live for Him, such a life sheds a light round about it which nothing else can. This is that “ purity of heart ” of which our Lord speaks—transparency of character.

POINT III.—*Take heed . . . that the light which is in thee be not darkness.* Here is the danger, lest our sincerity of aim should be dulled and darkened. If so, the whole life will suffer, and we shall be the prey of passion or covetousness, or of the love of the praise of men. We need here the illuminating help of the Holy Ghost.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve upon self-examination in regard to your motives.

APRIL 14.

Covetousness.

READ ST. LUKE xii. TO v. 35.

Take heed, and beware of covetousness.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord refusing to interfere in a family quarrel about an inheritance.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a true unworldliness.

POINT I.—*A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* Why not? Because life, true life, does not consist in anything that we have, but in what we are. The only thing which we really have is our character, which is what we are. Everything else leaves us at death. Hence the sovereign importance of character above everything else.

POINT II.—In the parable of the rich fool our Lord illustrates this teaching. Observe that the rich man had done nothing “wrong.” His land brought forth plentifully, and *then* came his temptation. He thought only of his animal life, his “soul” in that sense—forgetfulness of God owing to temporal prosperity! What a warning!

POINT III.—Consider that the sin of covetousness and avarice is likely to grow upon a man as life advances. Hence the need to look more and more to God only. The birds and the flowers teach us, our Lord says, contentment in the present and trustfulness for the future. God *knows*, He says, that we have need of food and raiment, and if we do not forget Him, He will not forget us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for more detachment.

APRIL 15.

Waiting for Christ.

READ ST. LUKE xii. 35 TO END.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the parable suggested—a servant waiting for the return of his master.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be ready when Christ comes.

POINT I.—After His sermon against covetousness and anxiety our Lord sets before us here the ideal attitude for a Christian in this world. First of all, there is to be the *loins girded*. This represents a strenuous life—a life of work, of ready activity. What says conscience? Do you give way to laxity and indolence?

POINT II.—*Lights burning.* The light is the light of prayer. Work and prayer must ever go hand-in-hand. To work without prayer is presumption; to pray without working is unreal. The inner and the outer aspects of life must be kept true to one another. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord.* When will Jesus return? We do not know. The early Christians lived in the expectation of His return. We need to cultivate this attitude. In any case we should ask ourselves from time to time, “Am I ready for Christ? Am I ready to leave this earth? What should I wish to have done before He comes or before I go?”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more consistent in your life and work.

APRIL 16.

The Barren Fig-tree.

READ ST. LUKE xiii. TO v. 18.

Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the parable of the fig-tree.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater fruitfulness in your life.

POINT I.—In its first application the parable refers to the Jewish people. The three years are, perhaps, the years of our Lord's Ministry. The fruit which as a nation they had brought forth was little more than formality, unreality, pride, and blindness of heart. Meditate on the power of the human will thus to frustrate the grace of God.

POINT II.—Apply the parable to your own life. The three years are the periods of childhood, youth, and later life. What fruit have you to show ? Examine the result of your life on others. How many people have you met ? How many of these have you benefited ? What if your opportunities had been given to others !

POINT III.—*Cut it down.* Who speaks ? The justice of God. *Let it alone.* Who speaks ? The love of God, the mercy of God. He will give me more chances through the merits of Jesus Christ. Let me avoid indolence and sloth. Let me be more quietly strenuous in my life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve upon more love towards God, more activity towards others.

APRIL 17.

The Strait Gate.

READ ST. LUKE xiii. 18 TO END.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the question, Are there few that be saved?

PRELUDE II.—Pray to use aright the opportunities of life.

POINT I.—*Are there few that be saved?* How natural the question, and yet observe how our Lord refrained from answering it! This is part of that “discipline of ignorance” under which we live. We can see such a very little way into the counsels and mysteries of God! This thought should keep us humble and watchful. Religion is a practical matter.

POINT II.—*Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* The word “strive” implies severe effort and strain—“agonize.” The Christian life must be one of effort and struggle, and we must not mind being sometimes worn and tired. Our Lord’s testimony must be true, yet He will not lay upon us any burden which He will not, at the same time, give us strength to bear.

POINT III.—*Many will seek to enter in.* Many will seek to enter into life by other ways than by the “strait gate;” but no! there is no other way! And at last there comes the close of opportunity—the door is shut! Oh, let me look narrowly at my life! Is there anything in it which needs correction? Am I struggling?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness to our Lord for having given us this warning.

APRIL 18.

The Great Supper.

READ ST. LUKE xiv. TO v. 25.

They all with one consent began to make excuse.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the parable of the great supper.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to take to heart its warning against worldliness.

POINT I.—*And bade many.* It was the custom to issue invitations many days before, and then on the day of the supper to send round to say that all was ready. So it is spiritually—we accept Christ's call in Baptism, at our conversion, or at Confirmation, or at our first Confession. We are led on gently and evenly. We are enrolled among the number of His expected guests.

POINT II.—*Come ; for all things are now ready.* In later life there is a fuller demand made upon us ; and we find, alas ! that the world has got a hold upon us. It is the "pride of having," or the "lust of getting," or domestic pleasures. One or other of these (pride, business, or home) has so wound itself round our heart that we have no inclination for spiritual things. What says conscience ?

POINT III.—Reflect that none of these things were wrong in themselves, but it was for undue attachment to them that these men were shut out. What a warning to business people, to pleasure-lovers, to selfish people, to yourself !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Watch the trend of your thoughts and affections. Check the beginning of covetousness.

Counting the Cost.

READ ST. LUKE xiv. 25 TO END.

Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.

PRELUDE I.—Consider our Lord warning the crowds which were following Him how much it would cost them to be His disciples.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance.

POINT I.—*If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, etc.* What a warning ! How surprised the crowds who heard Him must have been ! We must never think it an easy thing to be a Christian ! The service and love of Christ must be paramount. No love of father or mother or of our own lower "life" must interfere with it. The eye must be fixed on Him Whom we have chosen to follow. We want more constant thought of God !

POINT II.—Our Lord goes on to illustrate His meaning. First He speaks of a man proposing to build a tower. Has he sufficient to finish it ? So is the Christian life. It is a great enterprise, and we need all the help we can get. Do not be surprised if, as life goes on, you realize more fully the difficulty of being really true to Christ.

POINT III.—Then there is the parable of the king going to make war with another king. It points to the same lesson of counting the cost. Are you ready to "forsake"—to bid good-bye to—all that you have ? We can only become detached by learning more *attachment* to Christ. Test your thoughts, your heart, your plans, and be brave and trustful.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let to-day be a day of lifting up the heart and mind to God.

APRIL 20.

The Prodigal Son.

READ ST. LUKE xv. 11 TO END.

I will arise and go to my father.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the return of the prodigal.

PRELUDE II.—Thank God for His infinite love for repentant sinners.

POINT I.—After some stern teaching in the preceding chapters, our Lord speaks three parables illustrative of God's great mercy to sinners who repent—the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son. This last is “the pearl of all our Lord's parables,” “a gospel within a gospel.” Meditate first on the words *when he came to himself*. All sin is madness, as it misses the true end of life.

POINT II.—*I will arise and go to my father.* Once a son, always a son. Once baptized, always baptized. We cannot be re-baptized because we cannot be un-baptized. We have but to be *converted* and to return to our *Father*. It is our Lord Who has made us sons. It is only through His merits that we can claim the adoption of sons and say *Father*. What a revelation of love is this !

POINT III.—*A great way off.* God sees the first germs of true contrition, and even “runs” to meet the returning sinner. Never mistrust this love of God for penitents. If you have not fallen grievously think of the elder brother ! What an envious, miserable Christian he represents, with no love for returning sinners, envious of the love shown to the penitent son !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Trust in God's love: more love for sinners.

APRIL 21.

Dives and Lazarus.

READ ST. LUKE xvi.

Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the story.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to lead an unselfish life.

POINT I.—Consider the world's estimate of the two men. The rich man and his splendid entertainments would have been everywhere taken notice of. The rich man's funeral would have been magnificent and costly. No one would have known Lazarus, and he must have been buried in a pauper's grave. Are you afraid to be unknown in this life?

POINT II.—No one would have thought of asking after their death, "Where are they now?" But our Lord lifts the veil, and how awful is the revelation! We have only to read the story to realize how terrible it must have been to hear it coming from His lips Who cannot lie.

POINT III.—What was Dives' sin? It is not said that he was a libertine or immoral, only that he neglected to show mercy to a poor man! Look round at your opportunities. Ask yourself, "Who is the Lazarus at my gate?" Think of the hospitals and asylums; think of your poorer neighbours.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for the rich and prosperous that they may not forget the poor. Think of your own responsibilities.

APRIL 22.

Thankfulness.

READ ST. LUKE xvii. TO v. 20.

Where are the nine?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the incident of the healing of the ten lepers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray not to neglect the duty of thanksgiving.

POINT I.—Ingratitude is a quality whose badness we recognize readily enough. The ungrateful son or daughter, the ungrateful person whom we have helped—how hard it is to say a good word for them! Yet how common is ingratitude towards God! God is not thanked, He is too often ignored! *Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider.*¹

POINT II.—Why is this? Largely it is because we take God's blessings as a matter of right. Our health, our position, our wealth—all these seem to us our natural rights. Yet they are really examples of God's mercy and goodness to us, for which we ought assuredly to give thanks. How often do you really think of this?

POINT III.—Do we thank God in our prayers? before and after meals? in church? It is a good plan to habituate ourselves to saying some short, ejaculatory act of thanksgiving often. So St. Chrysostom used to say, "Glory be to God in all things." Take nothing as your due: thank God for everything.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think of the one grateful leper, and imitate him.

¹ Isa. i. 3.

APRIL 23.

Zeal.

READ ST. LUKE xvii. 20 TO END.

Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord urging the necessity of sitting loosely to the things of earth.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to live with your eyes on the eternal future.

POINT I.—*As it was in the days of Noe.* The great day of the Son of man will come, He says, unexpectedly and like a flash of lightning. There will be no time then to bethink ourselves of works undone, or to turn back on life and correct the past. All will, however, be well with us if we act and speak always with a view to Him.

POINT II.—*Remember Lot's wife.* She turned back to Sodom and became a “pillar of salt.” There can be no turning back when the great day arrives: let us remember this in the days of our health and strength. The world will be going on as usual. The question for each one is, Where is your heart really fixed?

POINT III.—*Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it.* If you set about making your life in this world your chief aim, you will assuredly lose your true and higher life. The life to aim at is the life in God, the unselfish life, the life of the soul, and we can be rightly careless about this lower life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a real zeal for God and for doing His work in the world.

APRIL 24.

The Pharisee and the Publican.

READ ST. LUKE xviii. TO V. 31.

God be merciful to me a sinner.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a truly humble and contrite heart.

POINT I.—At first reading this we feel inclined to say, “Thank God, I am not like the Pharisee.” Reflect that this is to be just like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the Publican! Self-complacency is always a fatal sign. The first step in spiritual advance must be laid in the conviction of our own shortcomings, to be *dissatisfied* with ourselves!

POINT II.—Comparison of ourselves with others generally leads to sin. It leads either to self-complacency, as in this case, or to despair. We have to consider only God and ourselves. We are judged according to our opportunities. What if the Publican had had the opportunities of the Pharisee!

POINT III.—*Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased*, etc. This is the law in God’s kingdom. If we would be hereafter exalted, we must humble ourselves here under the mighty hand of God. To realize our own nothingness and pollution in the sight of God—this is humility; and it is to the humble that God gives His grace.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to lay afresh the foundations of your spiritual life in humility.

APRIL 25.

Zacchæus.

READ ST. LUKE xix. TO v. 11.

He made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the eagerness of Zacchæus to see Jesus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more personal love to our Lord.

POINT I.—Here is a case of a rich man entering the kingdom of God. He was rich, and a tax-gatherer. How wrongly the people judged him! But Jesus knew his heart. *They murmured, but He says, This day is salvation come to this house.* How often we judge too harshly! *Judge not.*

POINT II.—*To-day I must abide at thy house.* How glad must Zacchæus have been to hear those words! He had wanted to see Jesus, and now, behold, He was to be his guest. So our Lord always meets us half way. If we go towards Him He will assuredly *draw nigh* to us. He will be no man's debtor in generosity.

POINT III.—*The half of my goods I give to the poor*, i.e. He will in future do this. This was the effect of the presence of Jesus in his house: it made him completely unselfish. What is the effect of the presence of Jesus in your heart? What about your unselfishness, your alms-giving, your thought for others?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reflect what your life as a communicant should be.

APRIL 26.

Parable of the Pounds.

READ ST. LUKE xix. 11-28.

Unto every one that hath shall be given.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord rebuking the slothful servant.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may duly use the gifts God has given you.

POINT I.—Reflect that God always gives us His gifts in germ. They need developing. This is true of all His gifts. God has so ordered it that the value of any gift, however brilliant, depends upon the character, not the character upon the gift. The noblest gifts may prove worthless if the character is weak or listless or wanting in perseverance.

POINT II.—This is obviously true of all natural gifts of body or mind. It is no less true of spiritual gifts. Gifts of grace are given in germ. The gifts given in Baptism or Holy Communion need the co-operation of the will. The will must take them and use them and develop them. They will not act mechanically.

POINT III.—The man who failed was the man with one talent. He did not *use* it, so he failed to *have* it in any true sense. If we have not many gifts the temptation comes to us not to use them. I can do so little, why should I do anything? And this leads on to hard thoughts of God, just like this man had! What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to struggle against indolence.

APRIL 27.

The Time of Visitation.

READ ST. LUKE xix. 28 TO END.

He beheld the city, and wept over it.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Jerusalem's last opportunity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to make the most of your own opportunities.

POINT I.—*The time of thy visitation.* Whenever God speaks to us it is a time of *visitation*. In sickness or ill-success or trouble He bids us look to our ways and see if there is anything left undone that we ought to do. Ask, Why is this sent me? Only be sure that it is sent for a good and holy purpose, and be patient and resigned.

POINT II.—*The time of thy visitation.* God speaks to us also in times of joy and gladness and success: these also are times of visitation. But how often we forget Him. To Him be all the glory if He allows us to succeed. Jerusalem in the days of her prosperity forgot God.

POINT III.—*He went into the temple*, etc. He cleanses once more His Father's house. Look at your house, your heart, your mind, your thoughts. How we need to keep the shrine of our inner being clean and bright, full of thoughts of love to God and man—no angry or proud or sensual thoughts to be harboured!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try to hear God speaking to you in your daily life.

APRIL 28.

Controversy.

READ ST. LUKE XX. TO V. 27.

Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the plot laid for our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be calm amid controversy.

POINT I.—We cannot always avoid controversy. It is always round about us, and sometimes it comes and knocks unbidden at our doors. Are you ready for it? How? By keeping close to God, doing or saying nothing from a motive of party spirit, but looking up to God for guidance. Party spirit comes generally from pride or selfishness.

POINT II.—*Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's.* There is a duty we owe to the State, and this coin is evidence of it. We must not make our duty to God an excuse for not being good citizens. We must accept all laws which are not contrary to God's law.

POINT III.—*Unto God the things which be God's.* Whose is the image and superscription stamped on *us*? Surely it is God's. It is to Him that we owe, therefore, ourselves and all we are and all we have. If the Jews had remembered this, they would not now have been paying tribute to Cæsar. The First Commandment *is* the first.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aspire to conform yourself more and more to the Image of Christ.

APRIL 29.

Almsgiving.

READ ST. LUKE xxi. TO v. 5.

She of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the widow casting her two mites into the treasury.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a right judgment in the matter of almsgiving.

POINT I.—We do not reflect enough on the duty of almsgiving. The widow is set before us as an example of completest unselfishness. Nearly every one if they had had only two mites would have kept *one*, but she put in *both*. Think of this, and realize how great her faith must have been in the goodness of God.

POINT II.—There is no hint that the widow knew anything about our Lord's commendation of her action. There could be no ostentation in her offering. Simplicity in almsgiving is one of the greatest difficulties. How much do you spend on others? Do you realize that a tenth (when such a proportion is possible) is due to God?

POINT III.—Relations have to be considered as well as the very poor; giving to the collections in church must be thought of, money spent in subscriptions. We have to think of these things and try to be just as well as generous. How about your responsibility in regard to money—your accounts?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make a resolution to be more systematic and thoughtful in almsgiving.

APRIL 30.

The End of the World.

READ ST. LUKE xxi. 5 TO END.

Take heed to yourselves.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the terrors of the last day.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be accounted *worthy . . . to stand before the Son of man.*

POINT I.—Three characteristics of the watchful Christian are sketched in this discourse. First, patience. *In your patience acquire ye your lives.* Our Lord's words point to the need of *endurance* or patience. As life advances we learn to realize more fully the need of this passive virtue of being able to endure. This suggests a discipline of the *will*.

POINT II.—*Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* This suggests earnest expectation. It points to an attitude of *mind*. On what are our thoughts fixed? On this world or on the next? On time or on eternity? As a runner keeps his eye on the goal, so should the mind's eye be fixed on God.

POINT III.—*Take heed . . . lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . cares of this life.* This plainly teaches us the duty of detachment. It is a lesson for the heart. The affections must not rest permanently on anything but God. All creatures—the love of others—are intended to lead us up to God. Only so can the heart rightly rest on them. What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Examine yourself in regard to your readiness for the coming of Christ.

MAY 1.

St. Philip.

READ ST. JOHN i. 43 TO END.

Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the call of St. Philip.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for simplicity of heart.

POINT I.—*Come and see.* This was Philip's reply to Nathanael's prejudice against any good thing coming out of Nazareth. This appeal to his own experience is characteristic of St. Philip. We ought to be able to say, *Come and see. I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.* A holy life is the best argument against those who doubt or disbelieve.

POINT II.—It was to Philip that our Lord addressed the question, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*¹ This was to prove him. So our Lord tests us. He sends us into difficult situations to test our reliance on Him. We are not to look to pennyworths of bread for help, but to *Him*. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*² This was Philip's other utterance recorded in the Gospel. It shows how slowly the truth about Christ's personality dawned upon the Apostles. Simple people can apprehend the need of a Saviour, but we must all our life through be trying to know Him better by means of prayer and meditation. *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say the Collect for this day.

¹ St. John vi. 5.

² St. John xiv. 8.

MAY 2.

Judas.

READ ST. LUKE xxii. TO v. 31.

Then entered Satan into Judas.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Judas bargaining with the chief priests.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to have a horror at the first approach of sin.

POINT I.—Satan's personality is strongly emphasized in this account of the act of Judas. He is the "Adversary" of God and of man. He approaches us as he approached Adam, with specious pleas. He may have suggested to Judas that, after all, he was only making Jesus declare Who He really was. But at the bottom of all sin is selfishness, and Judas was self-seeking. He sought his own advantage by basest means.

POINT II.—Satan could only *enter into* Judas with his consent. Satan has no *right* in the human heart. He stands outside the citadel of man's heart and tries to cast in his poisonous shafts; but we *can* always pick them up and hurl them out. Judas fell by his own act.

POINT III.—*Being of the number of the twelve.* No official nearness to Christ can ensure us against the most awful fall. This thought of the fall of Judas should keep us humble-minded. How little we know ourselves! How mixed and unworthy are the motives of our best actions! To be ordained or to be a worker for Christ is like throwing down a challenge to Satan.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make greater efforts at self-knowledge.

MAY 3.

Gethsemane.

READ ST. LUKE xxii. 31-54.

He went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Jesus in His Agony.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage in dark days of life.

POINT I.—He had often been to the garden, but never before to face such agony. He deliberately prepares Himself for this great struggle. Learn to face bravely the dark days of life—days of pain, bereavement, desolation of spirit. Expect your share of all this, and remember that your one resource is in prayer. *Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly.*

POINT II.—*An angel from heaven, strengthening Him.* If God does not remove from us our cup of suffering when we ask Him, He does always send us sufficient strength to bear up against it. Often, it may be, His angels are the unseen ministers of His consolation. New courage comes into us, and we can go bravely on.

POINT III.—*Rise and pray.* They were sleeping for sorrow—worn out with the excitement and foreboding of that night. Our Lord encourages us to *rise and pray*, lest we enter into temptation. Often we underrate the power of the enemy who attacks us—our sleepless foe who will take every advantage over our unguarded moments. What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be ready for dark days.

MAY 4.

St. Peter's Denial.

READ ST. LUKE xxii. 54 TO END.

Peter sat down among them.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene—St. Peter at the fire in the central hall ; Jesus being tried in one of the adjoining rooms.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be on your guard against sudden temptation.

POINT I.—Why did not St. Peter remember our Lord's warning ? Probably because he expected the temptation to come in a very different way. He looked for some great trial demanding heroic courage. We nerve ourselves for great trials, but allow ourselves to be conquered day by day in little things. Yet it is in these little things that our probation consists.

POINT II.—One sin leads to another. Peter began by an evasive answer, *I know not what thou sayest*; ¹ he is led on to direct lying, and then to cursing and swearing. A door is opened by one sin, and we cannot shut it till the whole drama is enacted. Withstand the beginnings of sin.

POINT III.—*The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.* What a look of tender reproach ! One day you will have to face the “look” of Jesus ! How will it find you ? In the Great Day, at all events, we shall be face to face with Him. What an incentive to try to keep the consciousness of His Presence always before us !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Beware of unguarded moments and small trials.

¹ Cp. St. Matt. xxvi. 70 *sqq.*

MAY 5.

Christ or Barabbas?

READ ST. LUKE xxiii. TO v. 26.

Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two prisoners.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may never be deterred by popular clamour from doing your duty.

POINT I.—Consider the crowd. Stirred up by the priests, who were themselves the victims of envy, they clamoured for the death of Him Whom a few days before they had welcomed with shouts of Hosanna. Learn to measure popular applause or hatred at its true value. Act simply with a view to pleasing God and from love of Him.

POINT II.—Consider Pilate. Knowing what his duty was, he struggled with his conscience for a time, and then gave in. Why? From selfishness, for so doing he would ingratiate himself with the Jews. Selfishness and self-seeking must be got rid of if we are truly to serve God.

POINT III.—Consider our Lord. Calm amidst the storm, the One Figure in all that concourse that we can look upon with comfort! No complaint! He accepts the unjust sentence! He bears the burden! What a lesson to us not to cry out directly we are treated (or seem to be treated) unjustly or harshly! Think of *Him* hearing those awful words, *Not this Man, but Barabbas!*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to act from a pure motive; to cast out all self-seeking.

The Two Malefactors.

READ ST. LUKE xxiii. 26-50.

The malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the three crosses.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for deeper penitence.

POINT I.—Consider the impenitent thief. Behold the mysterious power of freewill. The same appeal was made to both. God will not *force* any one to be good. If He were to do so it would be at the expense of his manhood and personality, for that implies the power of choice. But what a responsibility! We *can* check and thwart God's purposes for us!

POINT II.—*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.* The absolution is immediate—there is no delay. Such is the spontaneity of God's love. Forgiveness is a thing of the present. We are really forgiven when we repent, really taken back into union with God—able to make a fresh start.

POINT III.—Yet how the penitent thief suffered! All the pain of crucifixion, the legs broken, the intolerable thirst, and the exquisite pain of seeing Christ die! Learn that readiness to suffer is a mark of true sorrow. God hears, forgives, punishes. “Turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved.”¹

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Turn your punishment into penance, your suffering into a sacrament.

¹ Litany.

The Risen Christ.

READ ST. LUKE xxiii. 50 TO xxiv. 13.

Why seek ye the living among the dead?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the holy women at the sepulchre.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may rise to newness of life.

POINT I.—Our Lord's Body was the same after the Resurrection as before. *Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. Behold My hands and My feet!*¹ This clearly shows the identity of the Body before and after Resurrection. It is an image of our own case. This body which I have, I shall have for ever. How do I treat my body?POINT II.—But it was a glorified Body. It was endowed with new properties. It appeared and disappeared at will. It passed through closed doors. It could be disguised. What before was abnormal now becomes normal, and *vice versa*. So will our bodies be. *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*²

POINT III.—We can form no clear notions as to the details of the Resurrection life; but we may be quite sure that it will be an immeasurably fuller and nobler life, a life of activity and purpose in uninterrupted and conscious union with God; a life of work, but without fatigue.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to live more in the thought of the Resurrection life.

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 39.² 1 Cor. xv. 44.

MAY 8.

The Walk to Emmaus.

READ ST. LUKE xxiv. 13 TO END.

Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the two disciples joined in their walk by Jesus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for His companionship at all times.

POINT I.—Our Lord is always ready to be with us in our walks and conversation, in our business and in our leisure times. Our eyes are often *holden* because we forget His presence and do not pray enough. In going out or coming in, in rising up or sitting down, never say or do anything which would displease Him. He comes to us in the sick and in those who need our help.

POINT II.—*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?* He goes through all the scriptures of the Old Testament, and shows them that His Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection are all foreshadowed in them. *Beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, etc. In type or prophecy, all had been set down. Here is an encouragement for reverent use and study of the Old Testament. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*They constrained Him. He made as though He would have gone further.* So He tests our faith and perseverance. It is easy to begin, it needs great courage to persevere. We must often *constrain* Him not to leave us. The door of the human heart can only open from within. Resolve to keep Him within your heart evermore.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think of Jesus accompanying you in your walks and recreation.

MAY 9.

The Word made flesh.

READ ST. JOHN i. TO v. 29.

In the beginning was the Word.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mystery of the Trinity in Unity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater love and reverence towards God.

POINT I.—The Word is the “Reason” or “Thought” of God. As the Word, Christ expresses and reveals the Mind of God. Before all ages the Word was ever with or “towards” God; the Father eternally loving the Son, and the Son eternally loving the Father, and the Holy Ghost the Bond between the Father and the Son. In fullest and most perfect self-satisfaction dwelt from all eternity the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—Three Persons, One God.

POINT II.—*All things were made by Him.* The Word was the Agent of God in creation; God creates through His Word. When the Father acts, He acts ever through the Son and by the Holy Spirit. When the Son acts, He acts ever from the Father by the Spirit. When the Spirit acts, He brings with Him the Father and the Son.

POINT III.—*The Word was made Flesh*, i.e. God the Word took to Himself a new nature, viz. the nature of man. He took this nature at His conception in the womb of His Virgin-Mother. Thus He became the Second Adam (*the Lord from heaven*), and in Him humanity makes a fresh start. He Who made the world is to restore the world.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think more of the Incarnation. Say the Collect for Lady Day.

MAY 10.

The Lamb of God.

READ ST. JOHN i. 29 TO END.

Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene—St. John the Baptist pointing out Jesus as the “Lamb of God.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray to enter more deeply into the mystery of the Atonement.

POINT I.—St. John, coming from a priestly family, would be familiar with the ideas usually associated with the sacrifices of the Law. He must have understood that they pointed on to One Who should indeed bear, and bear away, the sin of the world. What mysteries lay hid in all that system of bloody sacrifices !

POINT II.—He is thinking, it may be specially, of the Paschal Lamb. As the Israelites were redeemed from bondage by the Paschal Lamb, so we Christians are rescued by Christ our Passover from the bondage of sin. Anti-type corresponds to type. The Red Sea points on to Baptism. The Passover foreshadows the Eucharist.

POINT III.—He is thinking also, as the last of the prophets, of that which Isaiah had spoken about the lamb led to the slaughter, and a sheep dumb before her shearers. He sees gathered up in Christ both the Law which typified Him and the prophets who foretold Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Lay hold, by faith and love, on the Lord as your Atoning Sacrifice.

MAY 11.

The Marriage at Cana.

READ ST. JOHN ii.

Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a due reverence for holy matrimony.

POINT I.—Our Lord does not shun social entertainments. He dines with the Pharisee, and attends this wedding feast. Consecrate your times of social intercourse to Him. Take Him with you. Pray before going into society that you may think, say, or do nothing that He would disapprove of. So will you lift up and help and cheer those amongst whom you move.

POINT II.—By His presence at this marriage our Lord has consecrated Christian marriage. It is a Sacrament in some real sense, and is a type of “the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church.”¹ The two lives are made one, just as Christ and His Church are one—husband and wife should have the same cares, hopes, and aspirations.

POINT III.—It is, like the union of Christ with our human nature, indissoluble. Nothing short of death can dissolve the bond. There may have to be in some cases separation *a mensâ et thoro*, but never can there be divorce *a vinculo*. To “marry” again in the lifetime of the wife or husband is to commit adultery.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve always to think and speak with reverence of marriage.

¹ The Marriage Service.

MAY 12.

Baptism.

READ ST. JOHN iii. TO v. 22.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

PRELUDE I.—Consider Nicodemus coming to our Lord by night.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize aright the privileges and responsibilities of Baptism.

POINT I.—By nature man comes of the sin-stained stock of Adam ; he inherits original or birth sin. Adam could not hand on to his descendants anything but a morally tainted nature. Human nature, therefore, needed not merely enlightenment, but re-creation. There must be some life-giving power coming into it from without.

POINT II.—It is through not recognizing this warp in human nature caused by the “Fall” that all ethical systems, other than the Christian, fail. The new birth of which our Lord speaks is Baptism. By it we are truly grafted into the God-united and life-giving humanity of Jesus Christ. This is the birth “by water and the Holy Ghost.”

POINT III.—*Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?* Nicodemus is gradually led on to fuller faith. Here he comes by night (for fear of being seen) ; later on he speaks in our Lord’s behalf before the chief priests (St. John vii. 50-52) ; lastly, he openly joins with Joseph of Arimathæa in burying the Body of Jesus (xix. 39-42). Conviction is the work of the Holy Ghost.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more faithful to your Baptismal vows.

MAY 13.

St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. JOHN iii. 22 TO END.

He must increase, but I must decrease.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the great preacher saying these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for genuine humility.

POINT I.—*A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*, i.e. We are to be what God has ordained us to be, and not to arrogate to ourselves positions which are not meant for us. *I said, I am not the Christ.* You have not the gifts that others have; you were never intended to have them. Be content. “His will is our peace.”¹

POINT II.—*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom*, etc. Here is the wonderful generosity and unselfishness of real humility. He is content to be the friend of the bridegroom, and to experience the unselfish joy which such an one has at the presence and voice of the bridegroom. Meditate on this self-effacement.

POINT III.—*He must increase, but I must decrease.* What a text for all workers for Christ! It is He Who must shine out in our lives: we must be working, not for ourselves, but for Him. *He must increase.* So let work become more disinterested and unselfish, more humble and pure.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cast out all desire of praise and power.

¹ *La sua volontate è nostra pace.*

DANTE, *Par.* iii. 85.

MAY 14.

The Woman of Samaria.

READ ST. JOHN iv. TO v. 31.

Jesus, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord sitting on the well talking to the woman.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have insight and courage in your interviews with others.

POINT I.—Meditate on our Lord's love for individual souls. Here He sits, wearied with walking, and talks to a woman of broken character, and wins her back to God. Cherish always the souls whom God sends to you, often as it seems accidentally, and never think lightly of the value of a single soul or of a small parish.

POINT II.—*Go, call thy husband.* Our Lord at once pierces to the heart of the malady. What a rebuke to our cowardice in dealing with others! How difficult to learn to be rightly severe, and not merely to say pleasant things! This needs prayer—prayer that we may have insight and courage as well as love.

POINT III.—*A Man which told me all things that ever I did.* Here was conviction of sin which our Lord had worked in her soul. This is the end to have in view in dealing with souls. Make them see their need of a Saviour. How? Largely by realizing this need ourselves. We must ourselves experience the joy of penitence in order that we may speak of it to others.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve always to pray before interviewing any one.

MAY 15.

Sowing and Reaping.

READ ST. JOHN iv. 31-43.

I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord staying two days with the Samaritans.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to use for good the opportunities of intercourse with others.

POINT I.—*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.* This should be our sustenance too—to do the will of God. There is no thought so sustaining in the midst of work, or of interruptions of work, than to reflect—“This is God’s Will for me: what He lays upon me, He will give me strength to bear.”

POINT II.—*I say unto you*, etc. The emphasis is on the pronoun. “*I* say that the *spiritual* harvest is here already. Here are these Samaritans ready to be won to God. You too—the Apostles—will be going out to gather in where I have sown.” Meditate on this—that all work for God is a sowing and reaping. But we often miss our opportunities, and so fail to reap.

POINT III.—*Now we believe, . . . for we have heard Him ourselves.* All our preaching and working is to bring men to Christ; they must believe on Him from *their own experience*, and not simply because of our word. This involves self-discipline and disinterestedness in life and work. Can they say of you, “What you told me I have found from my own experience to be true”?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Go about your work as one who is always reaping as well as sowing.

MAY 16.

The Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda.

READ ST. JOHN V. TO V. 24.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from the bonds of sin.

POINT I.—“The Church is the true Bethesda, the real house of mercy to which the diseased and helpless sons of men may resort for health. *There* is the saving fountain which God has opened for sin and for uncleanness. *There* are the true healing waters;—the sacred washing of Baptism, the ‘benefit of Absolution’ wherein we are washed by the Precious Blood” (P. Young).

POINT II.—*Sin no more*, etc. These words indicate apparently that the thirty-eight years’ infirmity were due to some sin in early life. If so, the words of our Lord warn us against the danger of relapse after forgiveness. Remember that “fresh sins destroy penitence,” and without the intention of amendment confession is a mockery.

POINT III.—*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* God’s work of upholding creation never ceases. To join in His beneficent work is no breaking of the sabbath. The law of love is superior to all merely ceremonial laws. This holds good in the Christian Church. Beware of harsh judgments about points of detail. *The sabbath was made for man.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to be cleansed more and more in the Blood of Christ.

MAY 17.

The Threefold Witness.

READ ST. JOHN V. 24 TO END.

These things I say, that ye might be saved.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord trying, in His love, to convince the Jews in Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a docile spirit to accept all that Christ has revealed to us in His Church.

POINT I.—Our Lord points first to St. John. *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.* They were inconsistent; they believed that John was a prophet—a burning and a shining light—yet they would not accept his testimony to Christ. Why? Prejudice. It is prejudice that keeps many away from the Sacraments, from Confirmation, frequent Communion, from Confession.

POINT II.—Our Lord then points to His works. *The works . . . bear witness of Me.* There are those now who admire His character, yet who will not believe His claims. But you cannot eliminate miracle from the Gospel record without destroying the record itself. He claims to work miracles.

POINT III.—*Search the Scriptures.* Here is a further witness. *They are they which testify of Me.* The New Testament is built upon the fulfilment of Jewish hopes and predictions. Christ is the key which unlocks the meaning of the Old Testament. Under type and figure, in prophecy and psalm, He is there.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve, after our Lord's example, to deal gently with those who will not receive Him.

MAY 18.

Solitude.

READ ST. JOHN vi. TO v. 22.

He departed again into a mountain Himslef alone.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord retiring to a mountain alone after this great miracle.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to make good use of times of solitude.

POINT I.—The multitude wished to make Him a king by force ; our Lord retires in solitude. In times of success, when people are congratulating you and making much of you, remember this example. Jesus goes apart so as to be alone. We should ask ourselves at such times, What is God thinking of all this ? That is the only thing which really signifies.

POINT II.—But solitude has its dangers. It is often a time of special temptation. The only safeguard of solitude is intercourse with God. So our Lord retires to the mountain in order to pray. Pray after a successful day. Others go back to their several tasks, you can go and pray.

POINT III.—Our Lord comes down from the mountain and stills the storm, walking on the sea. Prayer gives us power to meet the difficulties of life. We come down from the mountain-top with renewed spiritual vigour. All this—to retire from the crowd, to be alone in prayer, to emerge with fresh strength—needs the spirit of detachment. What says conscience ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make a better use of your times of solitude.

MAY 19.

The Living Bread.

READ ST. JOHN vi. 22-41.

I am the Bread of life.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord in the synagogue at Capernaum.

PRELUDE II.—Pray rightly to understand His Words.

POINT I.—*I am the Bread of life.* He draws a contrast between the manna and Himself as the Bread of life. Really to come to Him is to be sure of being received by Him. He came down from heaven and *giveth life unto the world.* See how He directs attention to *Himself.* This would be impossible in any merely human teacher. Our Lord can make this claim because He is truly God.

POINT II.—*Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.* The Bread is not only living, it is life-giving. Real life is life lived in the power of Jesus Christ. The Jews were condemned because they *saw* Him and yet *believed not.* Have you real faith in Jesus Christ? What do you risk for Him?

POINT III.—*I will raise him up at the last day.* The life begun here is continued hereafter. It is the same life. We receive it in germ here at our Baptism; it is renewed again and again by acts of faith and love on our part and by grace on God's part. The Eucharist is the "medicine of immortality."

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reflect upon the need of personal devotion to our Lord. Consider the yearnings of His sacred Heart for us.

MAY 20.

A Hard Saying.

READ ST. JOHN vi. 41 TO END.

This is an hard saying ; who can hear it ?

PRELUDE I.—Think of the people leaving our Lord because of the “hard saying.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be a consistent communicant.

POINT I.—*If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* On the doctrine of the Incarnation our Lord at verse 50 begins to build up the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. The two doctrines are closely connected. A disbelief in the Sacrament always leads to disbelief in the Incarnation. Conversely, the Real Presence safeguards the Incarnation.

POINT II.—*Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.* “Such as will live the life of God must eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of man” (Hooker). But how soon we forget our Communions ! How about your thanksgiving after Communion ? your recollectedness throughout the day ?

POINT III.—*Will ye also go away ?* As then, so now—many do “go away” when they hear of Holy Communion. The reason often is that they will not give themselves *wholly* to God ; there is some one sin which they *will* not give up. Ideally we should communicate whenever there is the opportunity : we should never “go away” even if we cannot communicate.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of your responsibilities as a communicant.

MAY 21.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

READ ST. JOHN vii. TO V. 25.

My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord encountering the opposition of the people.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for purity of intention in your work.

POINT I.—*Neither did His brethren believe in Him.* Our Lord had to encounter the opposition of his “brethren” and kinsmen. Often we may be misunderstood in our own home. There is always need of patient forbearance and gentleness in our own circle, and we have to remember that unselfishness at home should be our aim. We have nowhere a right to be self-centred.

POINT II.—*He is a good Man: others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people.* If we are in any degree in the position of teachers, we must not mind being sometimes misunderstood. There is such a thing as a right sort of indifference to men’s opinion, but we must be very careful of that other duty of “commanding ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

POINT III.—*My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.* Can you say this? Beware lest wilfulness creep into your teaching! *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*¹ Can you say this? If so, we can say with our Lord, If any man desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine; or, as St. Bernard says, “Love is the proper remedy for doubt.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to keep the eye of the soul fixed on God.

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Our Lord's Invitation.

READ ST. JOHN vii. 25 TO END.

If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord uttering these words on the last day of the Feast.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may thirst for the living water.

POINT I.—There is an allusion to the custom, at the Feast of Tabernacles, of bringing water from the pool of Siloam and pouring it out before the Lord upon the altar. Our Lord is the Fountain of Living Water, which gives us cleansing and the new birth in Baptism. It is to Him we look evermore for cleansing and refreshment—the two chief properties of water.

POINT II.—*If any man thirst.* It is always the principle upon which God acts in regard to His gifts—that they should be desired in order to be had. The waters are only for those who thirst for them. Christianity can only appeal to those who feel a moral want—the need of a Saviour, of forgiveness, of life.

POINT III.—*But this spake He of the Spirit.* He had spoken beforehand to Nicodemus of Baptism, in the synagogue at Capernaum of the Eucharist, so here He speaks of Confirmation which is to each Christian the counterpart of Pentecost. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. What a duty to “stir up” the Holy Spirit so that He may inspire our lives!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of the indwelling gift of the Holy Ghost.

MAY 23.

The Woman taken in Adultery.

READ ST. JOHN viii. TO v. 31.

Go, and sin no more.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for tenderness with sinners.

POINT I.—Our Lord constantly reminds us that we are to look into our own hearts. We are to judge ourselves rather than judge others. Do you do this? *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* Thus He made them pass from judging the sinful woman to judging themselves. “They were hypocrites, and He tore away the mask from them.”

POINT II.—*Jesus stooped down, and with His Finger wrote on the ground.* Why? To rebuke their shamelessness, and to teach us the duty of distracting our thoughts when we hear of sin. We can repeat a text or think of something pure and good. Resist the *beginnings* of evil suggestion.

POINT III.—*Go, and sin no more.* How foul was the sin of impurity to His spotless soul! Though He had rebuked her accusers, He must let the woman know that He loathed her sin. The “miserable and the Merciful” remained alone! He came to seek and to save the lost. Doubtless He saved her. What is the use of denouncing sin unless we are trying to save sinners?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Hatred of sin; love for sinners.

MAY 24.

The Claims of Christ.

READ ST. JOHN viii. 31 TO END.

Before Abraham was, I am.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the people trying to stone our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to love Him more.

POINT I.—*Which of you convinceth Me of sin?* Here is a claim to sinlessness. How different from all the prophets, from good men of every age! All these acknowledge their sinfulness. Not so Christ. He directs attention to Himself. No merely human teacher could rightly do this. He does it, and claims to be sinless. His opponents have no answer, but abuse.

POINT II.—*If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death.* He claims to give eternal life. He not only claims to be sinless, but claims to *give life* to others. He is the life-giving One Who came that we might have life. To be a Christian, indeed, is to have eternal life abiding in us.

POINT III.—*Before Abraham was, I am.* Here is a further claim still. It is the claim to be the Eternal God Himself. Before Abraham came into existence, *He Is.* With God there is neither past nor future; He is the Eternal Now. Oh, my soul, think Who thy Redeemer is, Who feeds thee and gives thee life which is life indeed!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think more to-day of the Divine condescension of Christ, Who, being God, became Man for us.

MAY 25.

The Healing of the Blind Man.

READ ST. JOHN ix. TO V. 39.

As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord healing the blind man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may really have the eye of your soul opened.

POINT I.—The miracle is also a parable. The Light is in the world, but only they who acknowledge their blindness can be brought to see it. *For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see.* The blind man is a type of those who desire to see, and they will be made whole in proportion as they long for sight.

POINT II.—The Pharisees are a type of those who “say they see :” they are self-satisfied ; hence they are left in darkness, they are “made blind.” *Now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth.* This is the position of those whose “portion is in this life,” who feel no need of Christ ; they are unconverted.

POINT III.—On the other hand, our Lord will not leave those who go to Him for sight till He has clearly made Himself known to them. He “found” the man born blind, and revealed Himself to him as the Son of God. As life goes on we must feel more need of His light, not less.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make the most of your times for prayer and meditation.

MAY 26.

The Good Shepherd.

READ ST. JOHN ix. 39 TO x. 22.

I am the Good Shepherd.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord as the Good Shepherd.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may follow His example in your care for others.

POINT I.—*He goeth before them.* He is our Divine Exemplar. In prayer and devotion, in speech and behaviour, we must look at and copy Him. To teach by word is one thing ; to teach by example is another and a much better thing. Morning by morning He leads us out into the pastures of daily work. So we must guide others.

POINT II.—*The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.* There must be self-sacrifice if we are to help others. Beware of selfishness and selfish plans. God and His glory must be the centre of our life. The most fruitful power in the world is self-sacrifice.

POINT III.—*I am come that they might have life.* The end of self-sacrifice is life—life for others. First there is the Atonement, and we are forgiven ; then there is restoration and new life. God's message to the world, in the Incarnation, is a message of *life*. The truest and fullest life is that of a Christian at one with God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to follow, at whatever distance, in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.

MAY 27.

The Ministry of St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. JOHN x. 22 TO END.

John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord going back to the place where John at first baptized.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

POINT I.—It was the unbelief of the Jews which drove our Lord out of Jerusalem and back to the Jordan. Think of the power that man has of rejecting the grace of God ! The same opportunities offered to all, but there are some people who never get near Him except, like the Jews in Jerusalem, to cavil at Him.

POINT II.—*John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true.* What a motto for a man's ministry ! We may not have any specially brilliant gifts. We may not be very learned or clever or attractive, but if our witness to Christ is *true*, men will be drawn to Him.

POINT III.—*Many believed on Him there.* Here was the result of faithful teaching. John the Baptist had passed through suffering to his reward ; but his works followed him. So may it be with us. If we sow faithfully, the harvest may tarry, but it will surely come, and many will believe on Him where we have worked.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Long more to bear faithful witness by your life to Christ.

MAY 28.

Human Affections.

READ ST. JOHN xi. TO v. 17.

Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord receiving the news of the illness of Lazarus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn from Him how to use and discipline your affections.

POINT I.—*Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.* It is clear from this verse that it was no part of our Lord's teaching that human affections were to be crushed. He loved this family at Bethany, and He would teach us thus to give play to right and pure affections. Affections need to be disciplined, not crushed.

POINT II.—*He abode two days still in the same place where He was.* Why? Possibly to teach us to discipline our affections and not to act impulsively. We ought to prepare ourselves to hear bad news and to keep calm through it all. This calmness in our Lord did not, we know, mean that He was not affectionate.

POINT III.—*This sickness is . . . for the glory of God.* It is right, surely, to ask when sickness comes to us, why it comes? It is always for the glory of God. Either it looks back and comes as punishment, or it looks forward and saves us from going on in some wrong course; it is preventive. Or, it may be, as this was, for the sake of others.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Examine yourself in your exercise of affection.

MAY 29.

The Raising of Lazarus.

READ ST. JOHN xi. 17-47.

I am the Resurrection, and the Life.

PRELUDE I.—Picture our Lord on His way to the grave of Lazarus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to have your share in the Resurrection of the just.

POINT I.—*If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.* Faith in the Resurrection of our bodies is part of the Christian creed. We do not know in what identity consists—not in identity of particles, for these change every few years—but this same body which I now have shall rise again. It will be a spiritual body, *i.e.* a body under spiritual laws, but it will be the *same* body.

POINT II.—*Lazarus, come forth.* Lazarus comes forth from the tomb to resume again his old life according to the flesh. Not so we at the General Resurrection. This life is but the beginning of an endless life hereafter. Are you entering into this thought in your daily life? I shall live for ever in endless weal or endless woe!

POINT III.—The miracle is also a parable. The soul in mortal sin is dead. We by influence or example can roll away the stone; we can bring it within reach of the Divine voice of power. It is only the Voice of the Saviour Who can raise it out of the sleep of sin. Are you doing what you can to bring others within the sound of that Voice?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to begin afresh to live the risen life.

MAY 30.

The Prophecy of Caiaphas.

READ ST. JOHN xi. 47 TO END.

It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the chief priests and Pharisees assembled in council.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

POINT I.—The raising of Lazarus, while it kindled the faith of some, increased the hatred of others. To the one section it was a savour of life unto life, to the other a savour of death unto death. To be brought in close contact with holy things or holy persons almost always has one or other of these effects. We cannot remain neutral. Are you whole-heartedly on the side of God?

POINT II.—*It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people.* This, on the lips of Caiaphas, meant no more than “we must at all costs get rid of this troublesome Teacher.” It was “expedient” that He should die. In varying forms the temptation to sacrifice principle to expediency is always with us, and often very pressing. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*Not for that nation only, etc.* Caiaphas unconsciously predicts the Atonement, the bringing back of man into union with God. So God overrules the crimes of men, and even brings good out of evil. Christ with His Arms outstretched upon the cross draws all men to Himself.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to be drawn nearer to the sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

MAY 31.

The Greeks come to Jesus.

READ ST. JOHN xii. 20 TO END.

The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the Greeks brought to Jesus by Andrew and Philip.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that God may be glorified in your life.

POINT I.—*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die*, etc. Our Lord sees in these Greeks the firstfruits of the Gentile world which shall be gathered in to Him. But the grain of wheat must die before it can bear fruit. “He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain. He entered not into His glory before He was crucified.”¹

POINT II.—*He that loveth his life shall lose it*, etc. The same truth under another form. We are never to settle down *contented* with anything this world can give us. If we “hate our life in this world,” i.e. if we are resting our affections in God (and not on anything this world can give), we are safe. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

POINT III.—*If any man serve Me*, etc. A life of self-denial here will lengthen out into an “eternity of glory and blessedness.” We have to follow our Master in conflict and suffering, on the cross here, waiting for the crown hereafter.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—

“If Thou callest to the cross,
And its shadow come,
Turning all my gain to loss,
Shrouding heart and home,
Let me think how Thy dear Son
To His glory came,
And in deepest woe pray on,
Glorify Thy Name.”

¹ Order for the Visitation of the Sick.

Jesus washes His Disciples' Feet.

READ ST. JOHN xiii. TO v. 21.

I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for real humility of heart.

POINT I.—Taken in its most literal meaning this act of our Lord was to teach us humility. He being what He was—*Knowing that the Father had given all things into His Hands* (such are the wonderful words with which St. John introduces his account!)—assumes the garb of a slave, and performs the menial task of washing His disciples' feet! How we shrink from the least humiliation!

POINT II.—This action of our Lord is parabolic of the Incarnation. He had, in becoming Incarnate, laid aside His glory and clothed Himself in the garment of our flesh, and *took upon Him the form of a servant*. The noblest life is that which ministers to the wants of others, and that means self-sacrifice.

POINT III.—The action is mystical, and speaks of the washing in Holy Baptism. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.* Once washed, or “bathed,” in the laver of Baptism, we need but to keep ourselves free from the dust of daily sin. Wilful deliberate sin should indeed be impossible for a Christian; nevertheless, for post-Baptismal deadly sin we have, if we need it, Absolution, and for venial sins the Lord's Prayer.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for humility as the foundation of all Christian progress.

The New Commandment.

READ ST. JOHN xiii. 21 TO END.

A new commandment I give unto you.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord bequeathing this new commandment to His Apostles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to love God, and others in and for God.

POINT I.—After teaching humility, our Lord goes on to speak of love. The two are closely connected. We fail in charity often because we fail in humility. Our pride keeps us aloof from others, and we disregard their wishes and prejudices. Considerateness is the result of humility of heart. What says conscience?

POINT II.—Why was it a *new commandment*? It was new in its range. It is easy to love those who are kind to us, but Christianity is not satisfied with this. We are to love and to be kind to all—our enemies as well as our friends. Reflect upon the way in which you commonly think and speak of any who have slighted or wronged you.

POINT III.—*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples.* Sometimes a verse like this seems almost ironical in the present state of Christendom and society. We must begin with ourselves—controversy need not be carried on with bitterness. We must speak the truth, but only in love.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Begin again in learning this new commandment.

The Three Answers.

READ ST. JOHN xiv.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord soothing the perplexity of His disciples as He prepares them for His departure.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more childlike trust in Him.

POINT I.—The answer to Thomas. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* He points him to Himself. They were to cling to Him as their Example, as their Teacher, as the sustaining principle of their life. None but a Divine Person could speak like this. We cling to Him because He is God as well as man.

POINT II.—The answer to Philip. *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father in Me.* Here is the truth of the mutual interpenetration of the Divine “Persons” in the Godhead. They are distinct, but inseparable; and thus the Son perfectly reveals the Father to men. To see and hear what Christ condemns or approves is to understand what God condemns or approves.

POINT III.—The answer to Judas. *If a man love Me, he will keep My words . . . and We will come unto him.* God can only “manifest” Himself to the soul that loves Him. The more love we have to God, the more He will make His way plain to us. To lose the love of God is the beginning of despair.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Amid the perplexities of life seek to love God and Christ more.

The Vine and the Branches.

READ ST. JOHN xv.

I am the Vine, ye are the branches.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord making this comparison.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may abide in conscious union with Him.

POINT I.—This close union with Christ gives us power in *work*. *Without Me ye can do nothing*, i.e. apart from Him we are powerless. We are not to rely on any power of natural activity, but on His abiding Presence in us, uplifting and sanctifying all our natural capacities, and consecrating them to His service. We shall thus *bring forth much fruit*.

POINT II.—*If ye abide in Me . . . ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* Union with Christ gives us power in *prayer*. To pray in His Name is to pray in union with Him: He prays in us and for us by His Holy Spirit. We should before and in prayer unite ourselves with our Lord.

POINT III.—*If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.* This union with Christ gives us patience under trial and opposition. It does not save us from these; it rather leads us to expect them. *Therefore the world hateth you.* Do not think, if you have to suffer in this way, that Christ has forsaken you: unite yourself more closely with Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire increasingly to dwell in Christ, and that He should dwell in you.

The Holy Spirit.

READ ST. JOHN xvi. TO v. 16.

He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord teaching His disciples that it was expedient for them that He should “ go away.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for love to the Holy Spirit.

POINT I.—His “ bodily ” presence removed, the Holy Spirit comes to accomplish His spiritual presence. Christ is present to us by His Spirit. He is nearer to us than if He were here in bodily presence, for He is within us by His Spirit. His Spirit at work in our hearts brings with Him the presence of the Father and the Son.

POINT II.—He convicts the world of sin. It is only by the power of the Holy Ghost that we can learn the true sinfulness of sin. The saints learnt their hatred of sin by His presence in them. *Because (or namely that) they believe not on Me.* The root sin is refusing to recognize God’s voice in the teaching of our Lord.

POINT III.—He convicts the world of righteousness and of judgment. It is the Holy Spirit Who makes it clear to us that our Lord’s “going to the Father” was the Divine acceptance of His righteousness, and that this acceptance involved the condemnation of Satan—*the prince of this world.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to pray more for the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind and quicken your conscience.

Prayer in Christ's Name.

READ ST. JOHN XVI. 16 TO END.

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.

PRELUDE I.—Consider our Lord's words about prayer.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may follow His guidance in this matter with childlike confidence.

POINT I.—What is prayer in Christ's Name? It is prayer such as breathes His Spirit; prayer which puts God and His glory first and our own needs second; prayer like the Lord's Prayer, which speaks first of God's Name and Kingdom and Will, and then of man's needs for body and soul.

POINT II.—Prayer in Christ's Name is prayer which treats God as a Father, as Christ has told us to treat Him. We must go to God, believing in His boundless love, and yet realizing that His love is not mere beneficence; that if He chastises us it is because He loves us. What need here of childlike trust!

POINT III.—Prayer in Christ's Name is prayer which establishes a friendship between the soul and God, a habit of intercourse between the Father and the child, in which the child tells the Father of all that is in his heart. This is what earthly parents most desire—that their children should be frank with them and trust them.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to speak to God simply, and to bring everything before Him in prayer.

JUNE 7.

Our Lord's High Priestly Prayer.

READ ST. JOHN xvii.

I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord praying this great prayer as He is leaving the upper room.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to glorify God by your life and work.

POINT I.—*Glorify Thou Me*, etc. Our Lord says He had glorified the Father's Name, and then He prays that the Father may glorify Him. Surely He is praying for the exaltation of His Human Nature. At His Ascension His Human Nature entered upon the glory which as God He had possessed from all eternity. Human Nature is on the throne of God.

POINT II.—*I am glorified in them*. Christ is glorified in His saints, for they reflect His likeness. He (has manifested the Father's Name and) has taught us what human life ought to be. In proportion as we follow His steps we "glorify" Christ our Master. We reflect Him in our lives.

POINT III.—*The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them*. Those who are "in Christ" have their nature exalted into union with Godhead, and are thus sharers in Christ's "glory." We are made "to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."¹ We advance "from glory to glory." Ponder on and thank God for the wondrous privileges of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to think, speak, act, and live for the glory of God.

¹ Eph. ii. 6; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The Arrest of Jesus.

READ ST. JOHN xviii. TO v. 28.

A garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord entering the garden of Gethsemane.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perfect calmness amid trials.

POINT I.—*Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples.* This makes it clear that our Lord was accustomed to walk in this garden and to talk to His disciples. He went, *as He was wont*, St. Luke tells us. Think of this when you are amid the beauties of nature or in a garden. See that you take Him with you!

POINT II.—*Whom seek ye?* Notice the *calmness* of our Lord. He knew what was before Him, yet He goes forward calmly and asks, *Whom seek ye?* He had, if we may dare to say it, acquired this calmness by prayer. The agony of prayer results in *perfect calmness*. What an example for us!

POINT III.—*Whom seek ye?* He repeats the question. Here is absolute courage and self-sacrifice. *Let these go their way.* He thinks only of the safety of His disciples; He forgets Himself. Prayer should make us courageous as well as calm. If we are at peace with God, having Him for our friend, what else really matters?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make prayer *tell* more upon your daily life, making you calm and brave.

JUNE 9.

Jesus—a King.

READ ST. JOHN xviii. 28 TO END.

Art Thou a King then?

PRELUDE I.—Consider Jesus standing before Pilate.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be obedient to Him as your King.

POINT I.—*My kingdom is not of this world.* This implies that He is a King and has a kingdom. But it is not such a kingdom as Pilate imagined. Though it is partly on earth, yet its origin was from heaven: it is a spiritual kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven, the Catholic Church, whose empire is in the hearts of men. Jesus claims a kingdom far greater than any earthly empire.

POINT II.—*That I should bear witness unto the truth.* He came into the world for this purpose—to reveal God's Will to man; to tell man of his true destiny, of the meaning of life, of the sinfulness of sin, of his need of a Saviour, of his future of endless bliss or endless woe. Before His coming men were groping in darkness; He shed upon them the light of Truth.

POINT III.—*Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice,* i.e. Every one who is on the side of truth, who really longs for truth, recognizes that what I say is the truth of God. Heart answers to heart. It is the careless or the insincere who ask, “What is truth?” and pass by on the other side. But what are you doing? Are you bearing witness to Truth, i.e. to Jesus? What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve not to omit any known duty.

“Behold the Man.”

READ ST. JOHN xix. TO v. 25.

I find no fault in Him.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Jesus, having been scourged and wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, brought forth to the people.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for tenderness of heart.

POINT I.—Here is a terrible picture! Pilate hoped to move the people to pity. Is this the Man who deserves to die? *His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.*¹ Yet it moves them not save to fiercer hatred. Reflect on the awful power of envious passion. Do you ever give way to this sin?

POINT II.—*He was the more afraid. Whence art Thou? Pilate sought to release Him.* Thus in this chapter is Pilate's piteous struggle with himself set forth! How terrible it is! He felt that Jesus was innocent; he could find no fault in Him, yet to please the people he crucified Him. Look into your own heart. Love of popularity, fear of men's displeasure—do these ever move *you* from the path of duty?

POINT III.—“Soon after this Pilate was recalled to Rome, and falling into misfortunes committed suicide.” It is not for us to use harsh words of Pilate, but rather to think of ourselves. How much of our religion is merely conventionality? What strain of popular disapproval can it bear? How far are you acting from selfish motives? What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray to be true to conscience at all costs.

¹ Isa. lii. 14.

JUNE 11.

St. Barnabas.

READ ACTS IV. 3 TO END.

Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Barnabas giving up his property.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to consecrate all your gifts to God for the good of others.

POINT I.—The community of goods described in this passage was a result of the unselfish spirit which possessed the earliest Christian community. Impossible as it is for all Christians to act thus, reflect that this behaviour of the Christians in Jerusalem gives the sanction of the Christian Church to all communities of men or women who feel themselves called to a specially consecrated life. Such are worthy of respect and reverence.

POINT II.—There is such a thing as private property, otherwise there would be no room for the Eighth Commandment, but we have to remember that all property is a trust from God. No one has a right to "do what he likes" with his own, because it is lent him by God in order that he may benefit his fellow-men. Can I be more unselfish?

POINT III.—The Collect reminds us that all this is true of other "gifts" besides that of property. St. Barnabas was *son of consolation*—a good man, and full of the *Holy Ghost and of faith*—unselfish and self-forgetting; he is a type of a Christian gentleman. Think what endowments you have and how you use them!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray to live for God and for others for God's sake. Say the Collect for to-day.

Scripture fulfilled on the Cross.

READ ST. JOHN xix. 25 TO END.

These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled.

PRELUDE I.—Three times in these few verses does St. John refer to fulfilments of the Old Testament.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for reverence and insight in reading the Scriptures.

POINT I.—*I thirst.*¹ Jesus had just uttered that most mysterious cry, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* Now there follows this simple, very human acknowledgment of physical pain. It was for our sakes He spoke it. Do you suffer from ill-health or pain? Remember always to unite any sufferings you may be called upon to bear with His.

POINT II.—*A bone of him shall not be broken.*² This was spoken of the paschal lamb. Our Lord is the true Paschal Lamb. Every faculty was stretched and trained upon the Cross, none were marred. This is a true image of Christian self-discipline. God does not require the crushing out or marring of any faculty, but the training of all.

POINT III.—*They shall look on Him Whom they pierced.* God in Zechariah says, *They shall look upon Me Whom they pierced.*³ St. John applies these words to Christ, Who is God as well as man. In the Apocalypse he again refers to the same Scripture, *Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.*⁴ Our sins pierced Him, yet there is comfort. A Fountain has been opened for sin and for uncleanness.⁵

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say “Rock of Ages, cleft for me.”

¹ Ps. lxix. 21.

² Exod. xii. 46.

³ Zech. xii. 10.

⁴ Rev. i. 7.

⁵ Zech. xiii. 1.

JUNE 13.

“Touch Me not.”

READ ST. JOHN XX. TO V. 19.

Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love towards the risen and ascended Saviour.

POINT I.—*Touch Me not.* The words imply a correction, albeit a very gentle one. They were a reminder that our Lord in His risen glory, though the same as before, yet was different. The clinging human affection of St. Mary Magdalene must in like manner be transformed. It is well to ask sometimes, Is my love for Jesus linked with an adoring consciousness of Who He is?

POINT II.—*For I am not yet ascended to My Father.* The words imply a promise. The time was at hand when in a truer sense she and others might “touch” our Lord. Union with Him is effected by the Holy Spirit which was the great gift of the ascended Redeemer to His Church. He unites us to Himself in sacraments and prayer by the power of the Holy Ghost.

POINT III.—*Go to My brethren.* St. Mary Magdalene has a work given her to do. She is to be taken out of herself by being made to think of others. So with us. No joy which is right joy can be selfish. We have to help others by imparting our joy to them. Religious emotion is dangerous, unless it issues in practical work for others.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Look up to our Lord, asking again and again to know and to do His Will.

Faith.

READ ST. JOHN XX. 19 TO END.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

PRELUDE I.—Consider St. Thomas before our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more vivid faith in Him.

POINT I.—St. Thomas is set before us in Scripture as a man of melancholic, phlegmatic temperament, the sincere doubter, whom our Lord, by a special appearance after His Resurrection, led back to faith. Consider how tenderly He would have us deal with “honest doubters.” There is such a thing as difficulty in believing. Are you gentle and considerate to others who do not see eye to eye with you?

POINT II.—St. Thomas is reproved for not believing the testimony of others who had actually seen the risen Lord. What sort of testimony do we give to others that we have, by faith, seen Christ? This is what non-believers look for, some mark in our lives that we are really His disciples. What does conscience say?

POINT III.—*Reach hither thy finger, and behold My Hands.* Faith is, after all, a supernatural gift of God. *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*¹ He alone can bring conviction to the soul. This is what we must, in the long run, tell the doubter. But what a blessed gift this is! God has left so many in ignorance, He has given light to you! Why?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Recommend your faith by your life.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

JUNE 15.

The Guided Life.

READ ST. JOHN xxi.

Follow thou Me.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter saying to our Lord,
Thou knowest that I love Thee.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to yield yourself willingly to the guidance of God.

POINT I.—*Lovest thou Me?* The first thing, if we would be guided by God, is to learn to love Him more. We trust ourselves, as a child does, implicitly to those we love—the more there is of love, the more real trustfulness. Are you, then, growing in love for God and for His Only-begotten Son made Man for love of us? Can you say, *Thou knowest that I love Thee?*

POINT II.—*When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself*, etc. Self-will is the great enemy to trust in God. How self-willed we are sometimes in our plans and hopes; yes, in our prayers too! This is striving to be independent of God. It is the child breaking away from the Father's love. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*Another shall gird thee.* What more blessed promise than this, if rightly understood—to be “girded” by God, to feel that if trials come they are sent by Him, and that His love for us desires nothing but our good! Thus we shall “glorify God,” whether it be by life or by death. “Glory be to God in all things,” were St. Chrysostom's last words.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Mistrust of self; trust in God; love for God.

JUNE 16.

The Gospel of the Holy Ghost.

READ ACTS i.

Wait for the promise of the Father.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Luke guided by the Holy Ghost to write this Book.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to take to heart the lessons contained in it.

POINT I.—This Book has been called the “Gospel of the Holy Ghost,” for it is a record of His Personal action in the Church. The Apostles were to wait for His coming (i. 4, 5, 8). Then follows the account of His descent. He guides Philip (viii. 29, 39) and Peter (x. 19). He sends forth Paul and Barnabas (xiii. 2, 4). He restrains Paul from preaching in Bithynia (xvi. 6, 7). The Book is thus a record of His work in the early Church.

POINT II.—The same Blessed Spirit is at work in the Church now. Some missions are signally blest, some are severely tried. Learn to see in the extensive work of the Church of to-day the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. Without Him no work could prosper. As He guided the earliest missionaries so He guides the latest.

POINT III.—*Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.* Reflect on the marvellous change wrought in the Apostles by the Spirit. From being cowards they become amazingly courageous—they speak the Word with all boldness; they rejoice in persecution, and go forward with a new and superhuman courage to witness for Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to think more of the personal action of the Holy Spirit.

JUNE 17.

The Coming of the Holy Ghost.

READ ACTS ii.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more vivid belief in the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit.

POINT I.—The Day of Pentecost is the Birthday of the Church. Before the coming of the Holy Ghost there was indeed the framework of the Church ; but the Holy Spirit gave life to the Church. Before He had operated in individuals here and there, now He came personally to dwell in the Church, the spirit-bearing Body of Christ. The Voice of the Church is the Voice of the Holy Ghost.

POINT II.—It is not, however, that Christ is absent and the Spirit present. Christ is present by His Spirit. The coming of the “other Comforter” was in a mysterious way the coming of Himself. *I will come to you*, He says: *We will come to you*—for the coming of the Holy Ghost involves the coming of the Father and the Son. This is the mystery of the “co-inherence” of the Trinity which safeguards the truth of the Divine Unity.

POINT III.—The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church: He dwells also in every member. *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* In Baptism He comes ; in Confirmation He comes in fuller measure ; in Ordination for special gifts of service. It is for us to *stir up the gift that is in us.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say more often the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, “Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come.”

The Preaching of the Resurrection.

READ ACTS ii. 23 TO END.

He . . . spake of the Resurrection of Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter preaching to the assembled multitude.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for spiritual insight into Scripture.

POINT I.—St. Peter's chief theme is the Resurrection. In all his sermons the Resurrection is the prominent subject (see Acts ii. 15, 26; iv. 33; x. 40). It is the same with St. Paul (see Acts xiii. 30; xvii. 3, 18). Christianity rests on the literal truth of Christ's Resurrection. By it God set His seal to the truth of Christ's life and teaching. It is, too, on His Resurrection that our hopes are based that we also shall rise again.

POINT II.—St. Peter points to the sixteenth Psalm, and insists that David had predicted Christ's Resurrection in the words, *Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell*. David, says St. Peter, *being a prophet, . . . spake of the Resurrection of Christ*. St. Paul appeals to the same Psalm at Antioch in Pisidia in proof of the Resurrection.¹ Thus both Apostles bid us dwell on this prediction of David's.

POINT III.—When we say in the Creed, *He rose again according to the Scriptures* (quoting St. Paul's words in 1 Cor. xv. 4), we refer primarily to this Psalm, for it is the special passage to which, in this connection, attention is drawn in the New Testament. The facts recorded in the New Testament are fulfilments of hopes and predictions found in the New.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence for the Resurrection. Pray for insight into its truth.

¹ Acts xiii. 30.

The Power of the Risen Christ.

READ ACTS iii.

The Prince of Life, Whom God hath raised from the dead.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the crowds surrounding St. Peter and St. John after this miracle of healing.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater faith in the power of the Risen Saviour.

POINT I.—*Why look ye . . . on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?* Reflect well how the two Apostles point away to themselves on to our Lord. Are you careful to pass on every word of appreciation or praise which you may receive to Christ and to God? *Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give the praise.*

POINT II.—*His Name through faith in His Name hath given Him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.* It was the power of the Risen Saviour, St. Peter insists, which had wrought the miracle. The Risen Saviour works by the power of the Spirit, Who takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto men. *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*¹ Faith in Jesus is His gift.

POINT III.—Miracles of healing such as this were for the spread of the faith. We hear from time to time of similar miracles now. But the great moral miracles of conversion which is going on all round us are, no less, manifestations of the power of the Risen Saviour. It is His Name alone which can convert the sinner.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Devotion to the Risen and Glorified Redeemer.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Christian Boldness.

READ ACTS IV. TO V. 32.

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John . . . they marvelled.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the two Apostles making their defence before the Council.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for Christian boldness.

POINT I.—Boldness is the keynote of to-day's lesson. First of all, the Apostles were courageous in declaring that *there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* How different to the vaunted liberalism of to-day which says it does not matter what you believe! Are you content to be narrow with the Apostles? It needs courage.

POINT II.—Then they were bold in declaring that they must obey God rather than man. If the law of the State unhappily conflicts with the law of Christ and of His Church, there is no doubt about the line which a Christian ought to take, *e.g.* in regard to the marriage laws. But this requires real courage.

POINT III.—They were bold also in setting themselves in opposition to the mass of their countrymen. Often it is right to take a line at variance with the opinion of those amongst whom we move. But how hard is moral courage! To say grace, to observe the fasts, to kneel down in a church—all this requires great moral courage sometimes.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for courage as the Apostles did. It comes as a gift of God the Holy Ghost.

Ananias and Sapphira.

READ ACTS V. TO V. 17.

Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie against the Holy Ghost?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the terrible judgment on Ananias and Sapphira.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of holy fear.

POINT I.—To lie against the Holy Ghost is to lie to God: this passage clearly indicates the Deity of the Holy Ghost. Some signal manifestation was required to show that the Divine Spirit by Whose power such miracles of healing were wrought, was first of all the Spirit of *Holiness*, Who could not be trifled with by insincerity and lying. Have you the spirit of holy fear?

POINT II.—The sin was one of insincerity and hypocrisy. They were not obliged to sell their possessions, or when sold to give all to the Apostles. Their sin was that they brought *part* of the price and pretended it was the *whole*. Meditate on the application to almsgiving. Are you sufficiently liberal? Are you sincere?

POINT III.—Reflect upon the sin of moral insincerity. How little do we know ourselves! How often worldliness and selfishness creep into our designs and plans! We need the help of the Holy Spirit to search again and again into the depths of our hearts, lest unknowingly we should fail in sincerity of aim.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart.*

Jesus and the Power of the World.

READ ACTS V. 17 TO END.

Go, stand and speak in the temple . . . all the words of this life.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Apostles brought before the Sanhedrin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for guidance and a right judgment in times of stress.

POINT I.—We have in this passage the two powers set one over against the other—the power of the world and the power of Jesus. The Apostles were imprisoned, but were delivered by the angel. Human might on one side, Divine strength on the other ; *the words of this life*—the true life—against worldly wisdom and power. Pray to be found fighting on the right side.

POINT II.—The spirit of the world has entered into the divinely appointed hierarchy ; hence there is cruelty and injustice where we should look for justice and discrimination. It has often been so in the history of the Church—jealousy and envy of some new spiritual force ! Search your heart and see if you have indeed the *Spirit of Jesus*.

POINT III.—*Daily . . . they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* Quiet continuance in well-doing was the only answer which the Apostles gave to the opposition of the Jewish hierarchy. It is our best answer always to calumny—to go on quietly doing our work, preaching Jesus Christ in our daily life with love and tenderness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to be found always and at the last on the side of Jesus Christ.

JUNE 23.

St. Stephen.

READ ACTS vi.

Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the ordination of the seven deacons.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gifts of wisdom, faith, and power.

POINT I.—They were ordained to “serve tables.” They were to do the ordinary work of distributing alms. Yet they were solemnly ordained to this by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands. Learn that lesser duties are real duties and ought to be done in the power of the Holy Ghost. All higher vocations are built upon the exact performance of ordinary duties.

POINT II.—Stephen was *full of faith and power*. That the first deacon should be the first martyr illustrates what those in a lower order of the ministry, or what laymen, may do by the power of a saintly life. Aim at holiness. Pray that the Holy Spirit may fill your mind and heart and will.

POINT III.—*All that sat in the council . . . saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* We become like those we love. To become like God and His angels we must, while we do our work here, constantly be looking upward like those *worshipping spirits sent forth to minister*—a life of worship and a life of service.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Realize that it is only by the power of the Holy Ghost that you can become what God intends you to be.

JUNE 24.

St. John the Baptist.

READ ST. MATT. iii.

Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. John appearing among the people after a long time of solitary communing with God in the desert.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true repentance.

POINT I.—St. John is the type of a truly disciplined life, first “learning to do hard things in the desert,” and then coming forth to preach repentance so powerfully because his life was so lived in God. Men watch us; it matters more what we do than what we say. If our words are to be thunder our life must be as lightning.

POINT II.—*We have Abraham to our father.* No boast of any external privileges can avail against wrong conduct. Character is everything. The fact that we are Christians and Catholics will only avail to condemn us unless we are trying to conform our lives to the pattern of our Master.

POINT III.—*He that cometh after me is mightier than I.* St. John points on to another; he himself was but the forerunner; he witnesses to Christ. Woe be to us if we make ourselves a centre to others instead of pointing them on to Christ! Are you learning to be thus disinterested, to be free from selfishness and selfish plans?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve, after St. John’s example, to avoid luxury and excessive love of comfort.

St. Stephen's Defence.

READ ACTS vii. TO v. 35.

The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.

PRELUDE I.—Consider St. Stephen before the council.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be true to God's guidance and inspiration.

POINT I.—St. Stephen had been accused of blaspheming God. In reply he looks up to the God of glory (*i.e.* the God of the Shekinah or the “glory of the Lord”), and bases his defence upon His Will. Rightly understood, and when unveiled by the Holy Ghost, the history of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses were foreshadowings of a Redeemer, a Saviour Who was to come. Though not naming Jesus, he leads up to Him.

POINT II.—Especially is this true of Moses, whom St. Stephen had been accused of speaking against. This Moses in his work, and especially in his rejection, was a type of the true Moses—the Deliverer, the Mediator, and the Ruler. So far from speaking *against* Moses, by confessing Christ, he points to the true Moses.

POINT III.—This shows us how to look for Christ in the Old Testament. He is shadowed out in types like Joseph and Moses no less surely than in actual prediction. The Old Testament is the germ from which the flower and fruit are to spring.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to read and listen to the Old Testament as prefiguring Christ.

Resistance to God the Holy Ghost.

READ ACTS vii. 35 TO END.

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Stephen standing alone before the Sanhedrin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be always obedient to the voice of conscience.

POINT I.—St. Stephen presses home the truth that as the Jews of old rebelled against Moses, so their descendants in each generation had rejected God's messengers, and so also had those of this generation been the *murderers and betrayers* of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Ghost will not force us—He does but strive with us. We *can* resist His gracious influences. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*He, being full of the Holy Ghost.* On the one hand, there were those who were *resisting the Holy Ghost*, though they sat in Moses' seat; on the other, the solitary deacon *full of the Holy Ghost*. In this state was vouchsafed to him the vision of the Risen and Ascended Redeemer *standing* (having risen up to defend His martyr) *at the right hand of God*.

POINT III.—*They stoned Stephen.* The world-power seemed to conquer, but the real victory lay with the martyr, who dies with a prayer for his murderers on his lips. Christ's martyr triumphs, as Christ Himself had done, by the power of gentleness and meekness. *Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness*, these are the work of God the Holy Ghost.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for gentleness; say the Collect for St. Stephen's Day.

JUNE 27.

Confirmation.

READ ACTS viii. TO v. 26.

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter and St. John confirming the Samaritan converts.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to value rightly the gift given you in Confirmation.

POINT I.—St. Philip could baptize, but being only a deacon he could not confirm. St. Peter and St. John went to Samaria to confirm St. Philip's converts. From the first the power of bestowing this gift of the Holy Ghost was limited to the Apostles and then to the Bishops. Hierarchical order in the Church is itself the work of God the Holy Ghost. If St. Philip could have confirmed these disciples there would have been no need of the presence of the two Apostles.

POINT II.—At Baptism the Holy Ghost comes to us, for He is indeed the "Giver of Life," Who imparts to us the New Life and makes us members of Christ. In Confirmation He comes to us in fullest measure, giving us the gifts of courage and strength for the battle of life—Confirmation is an ordination to the lay-priesthood of the Church.

POINT III.—If we are confirmed, we have received this great gift of God the Holy Ghost. He is indeed within us. Do you recollect this? If you frequent the Sacraments do not let this duty lead you to forget the presence and work within you of the Holy and Life-giving Spirit of God—the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to say from time to time the *Veni Creator.*

NOTE.—In the Eastern Church priests "confirm," but only with unction consecrated by the Bishop.

St. Philip and the Ethiopian.

READ ACTS viii. 26 TO END.

I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene—St. Philip and the Ethiopian in the chariot.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize your responsibility towards “chance” acquaintances.

POINT I.—The meeting of St. Philip with the Ethiopian was owing to the guidance of God. *The Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip. . . . Then the Spirit said unto Philip.* There is no such thing as chance, and we have a responsibility towards those whom we meet casually as well as towards those amongst whom we habitually move. How often do you think of this, and act upon it?

POINT II.—*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* We need guidance in reading the Old Testament, and here is a good illustration of the way in which the first preachers of the Gospel found in Jesus the key to it. The New Testament lies hid in the Old ; the Old Testament lies revealed in the New (St. Augustine). In reading, then, Isa. liii. we are sure of our ground in interpreting it of our Lord.

POINT III.—*The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.* Here is a lesson of detachment. Philip delivered his message, baptized the Ethiopian, and departed. He had sown the seed, it would be for others to reap the harvest. What a lesson of detachment for those engaged in teaching ! Do you pray for disinterestedness and unselfishness in your work ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray to do your duty towards those whom you may casually meet.

JUNE 29.

St. Peter.

READ ST. JOHN xxi. 15-23.

Lovest thou Me?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter restored by our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for love of Christ as the motive of all your work.

POINT I.—The first essential in a Christian worker is love of our Lord. Learning and eloquence are great helps, love of the work a greater help, love of souls a still greater help; but at the bottom of all work there must ever be the love of the Lord Himself. “I have but one passion, and that is *He*,” said a great missionary.

POINT II.—The next thing for Christian workers to remember is that they must *feed* the souls committed to their care. Everything else—entertainments, clubs, etc.—are only means to this end, viz. to give them Christ Himself—by Word, by Sacrament, by example; to bring them to Him that they may feed on Him.

POINT III.—But besides *feeding*, our Lord uses another word, *Tend My sheep*, i.e. protect and guide them. All this applies specially to the clergy; but in a measure, also, to parents, teachers, and all Christians. In some measure we all have the *care of souls*. Can any charge be more precious?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make the foundation of your work, love for our Lord.

JUNE 30.

God's Discipline.

READ ACTS ix. TO v. 23.

I will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.

PRELUDE I.—Consider Ananias' hesitation when told to baptize Saul.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness in dealing with others.

POINT I.—*Lord, I have heard . . . how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem.* This was a natural expostulation. It seemed incredible that such an one could be converted. We want more faith in the love of God. That vision of the Saviour had converted the bigoted persecutor. No one is beyond the operation of grace. Be hopeful.

POINT II.—*He is a chosen vessel unto Me.* God's election is a great mystery. In working for God you may often be the means of bringing to Him others who will do far greater work for Him than you have ever done. Ananias' name disappears, St. Paul's is writ large in history.

POINT III.—*I will show him, etc.* God will Himself discipline St. Paul. What a rough and battered life he had to live! So God will discipline you. The moral government works with exceeding exactness. *He* will discipline and purge us through suffering and bereavement.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make fresh resolutions to be gentle in dealing with others.

JULY 1.

Suspicions.

READ ACTS ix. 23 TO END.

They were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul suspected by the Christians in Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a charitable heart.

POINT I.—Paul had now cast in his lot with the Christians, but while his old friends despised him the Christians in Jerusalem suspected him. If we are true to conscience we must sometimes run the risk of being at once despised and suspected. What a call to disinterestedness and courage and loving perseverance! We must not get hard and unloving.

POINT II.—*But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, etc.* Here is the Christian way of allaying suspicions and of dealing with men. He *explained* how matters really were. If we could only act like Barnabas—the Son of Consolation—and explain matters! Misunderstandings often arise from our not taking pains to see enough of others.

POINT III.—*Then had the Churches rest.* There was a pause before the actual admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church. In times of peace and quietness God intends us to prepare for storm and stress, or for some new manifestation of His love and power. *The fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost* will enable us to go steadily on with our life's work.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more sympathetic.

JULY 2.

The Vision of St. Peter.

READ ACTS X. TO V. 24.

What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter's vision.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be always ready to learn in whatever way God may teach you.

POINT I.—St. Peter's vision was the great turning-point in the history of Christianity. Now for the first time it was clearly revealed that the Christian Church was to embrace within its folds Gentile as well as Jew. Our Lord had foreshadowed this in His parables, but it needed a vision such as this to make it clear to His chief Apostle. Thus gradually new truths are borne in upon us.

POINT II.—How wonderfully the two visions fitted into one another! Cornelius was told to send for St. Peter, and St. Peter was at the same time prepared for the messengers, and made ready to understand the meaning of their message. It is one of those many "coincidences" in which we may clearly see God's Hand.

POINT III.—But God speaks to men differently. Cornelius was wide awake, and he *saw* the angel. St. Peter was asleep, and he saw only with the eye of his mind. So now God speaks to us, now in one way, now in another. The important thing is to have a listening ear ready to hear His Voice in whatever way He speaks.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be unprejudiced. Be ready to learn new truths.

JULY 3.

The Baptism of Cornelius.

READ ACTS X. 24 TO END.

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater reverence towards the Sacrament of Baptism.

POINT I.—It is worth while to reflect that the first Gentile to be baptized was a soldier. The centurion of Capernaum, the centurion at the Cross, and Cornelius are all brought before us as devout men. The profession of a soldier, as of one who is ready to give his life for his country, is thoroughly honourable and noble. What are you doing to help soldiers to live Christian lives?

POINT II.—*The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.* This was the “Gentile Pentecost.” This outpouring of the Holy Ghost preceding Baptism was to mark the beginning of the Gentile ingathering. It was a special mark of God’s favour on the prayers and alms of Cornelius.

POINT III.—*Can any man forbid THE water?* “Though an angel and St. Peter and the Holy Ghost Himself had enlightened their souls,” yet they were not dispensed from the necessity of Baptism. It is no sign of spirituality to despise the use of Sacraments. Rather it is a sign of pride. If God has ordained them, it is our duty and privilege to use them.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thank God for the unspeakably precious gift of Baptism, whereby you were made a member of Christ.

JULY 4.

Christians.

READ ACTS xi.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the small despised body of “Christians” in the “greatest and the worst of oriental cities.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for moral courage to confess Christ before the world.

POINT I.—Antioch was the place where the Gentile Church first sprung up. It was the third city of the empire, with half a million inhabitants. It was a notoriously profligate place. Here the members of the Church were nicknamed “Christians.” Soon they learned to glory in the name. Similarly the Cross—the symbol of shame—became the sign of redemption.

POINT II.—Two other nicknames were given to the early disciples by the Jews, viz. Galilæans and Nazarenes. Both were meant to indicate contempt and obloquy. It is well to ponder over these opprobrious names, for so we realize what it cost men to become disciples of the Crucified. What does your religion cost you now?

POINT III.—On the other hand, Christians called themselves “the brethren,” or “the disciples,” or “the faithful,” or “saints”—“brethren” because they were of the Family of Jesus Christ, and “disciples” because they were His followers; “faithful” and “saints” because they were baptized and separated off from the world and consecrated to God. These seven names give us a picture of the Early Church.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cultivate “quietness, peace, and love” among Christians.

JULY 5.

St. Peter in Prison.

READ ACTS xii.

Peter therefore was kept in prison.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter sleeping between the two soldiers to whom he was chained.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for complete trust in God in times of danger.

POINT I.—Herod, *because he saw it pleased the Jews*, was going to kill St. Peter as he had already killed St. James. St. Peter must have known this, yet he sleeps! Consider what trust in God this implies! Such tranquillity and peace of mind is a rebuke to our anxiety. It can only come from the testimony of a good conscience. Why are you so often anxious?

POINT II.—*The angel of the Lord came upon him. . . . He thought he saw a vision.* Plainly God does use the ministration of angels in His dealings with men. We need to be more on the alert that we may see God's Hand in the ordering of our lives. Our escapes from dangers and accidents, are they not due sometimes to the intervention of angels?

POINT III.—*The iron gate . . . opened to them of his own accord.* So the difficulties which we anticipate often fade away when we actually come up to them—meetings which we dreaded, people we disliked meeting. How often for us, too, has the iron gate opened of its own accord! This should surely make us more trustful for the future!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Courage to persevere. Trustfulness in danger.

JULY 6.

Foreign Missions.

READ ACTS xiii. TO v. 26.

The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul.

PRELUDE I.—Here we have the account of the first organized Foreign Mission of the Church.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for God's Blessing on Foreign Missions.

POINT I.—Great stress is laid by St. Luke on the immediate action of the Holy Spirit. First in the "separation" of Saul and Barnabas. *The Holy Ghost said.* It needs a special call of the Holy Spirit before a man or woman can offer themselves rightly for this high work. But all of us should ask ourselves from time to time whether God's call may not be coming to us?

POINT II.—*Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.* He separates off by inward and outward call, and then He sends forth His messengers. This cuts at the root of all self-will as to where we are to work. We must look up to God for guidance, and He will speak to us by His Holy Spirit, and show us where we are to go.

POINT III.—*Saul, filled with the Holy Ghost.* The expression implies a special gift of the Holy Ghost (not merely a general spiritual influence residing in the Apostle). When we meet with opposition we are to combat it, not in our own strength, but by the power of the Holy Ghost which will be given us. If only we could realize more fully this direct action of the Holy Ghost on us and within us!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Rely on the guidance of the Holy Ghost in your work.

JULY 7.

St. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia.

READ ACTS xiii. 26 TO END.

We declare unto you glad tidings.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul preaching in the synagogue.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to hold fast the faith of the Gospel.

POINT I.—St. Paul dwells first on the Death of Christ. In killing Jesus, the Jews, he says, had fulfilled the *voices of the prophets*. Christianity is built upon the fulfilment of Jewish predictions and hopes. *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, etc.¹ The older scriptures speak of a suffering Messiah—a suffering servant who passes through suffering to glory (see Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii.).

POINT II.—His next point is the Resurrection. “God hath fulfilled the promise made unto the fathers by raising up Jesus again.” For this he quotes Ps. xvi. *Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.* It was the Resurrection which was the central theme of Apostolic preaching, for it is this which makes it certain that Jesus was what He claimed to be.

POINT III.—*Forgiveness of sins* and justification through faith in the Saviour is St. Paul’s conclusion. This was the final *word of this salvation*. Would they have it? The Jews reject it, and he turns to the Gentile. The world now turns away from it: it thinks it all unnecessary. Why? Because it has so little sense of sin. Is your hope set on Christ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Trust in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as your guide in life, your stay in death.

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 46.

JULY 8.

Public Opinion.

READ ACTS xiv.

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene at Lystra when the people wanted to sacrifice to the two Apostles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a right sort of indifference to public opinion.

POINT I.—*The gods are come down to us*, etc. Sometimes public opinion flatters us, admires our sermons or our conversations. Local newspapers applaud us, and our photographs are in the shop windows. Are we proof against flattery? To God be all the glory! *Sirs, we are men of like passions with you!* We seek to turn you from idols—the worship of the world and wealth. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*They stoned Paul.* As with our Lord, so with His Apostles—“Hosanna” one day, “Crucify” the next. So with us. Preach an unpopular doctrine and the world turns round upon us, and instead of flattery there is abuse. Never meet the world with its own weapons, but meet it like our Lord did—with unswerving meekness and firmness. *Supposing he had been dead.*

POINT III.—*Through much tribulation.* As they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, this was their message. They did not say that Christianity was an easy religion or that we could hope to escape suffering. Yield yourself in surrender to God’s Will, and with the suffering He will give you strength to bear it.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Independence of public opinion.

JULY 9.

The Council of Jerusalem.

READ ACTS XV. TO V. 30.

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. James summing up the resolutions of the Council.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a right judgment in all the difficulties of the Church.

POINT I.—Observe first how appeal is made to the facts of the case. God has, both in His dealings with St. Peter in the case of Cornelius and in His dealings with Paul and Barnabas in Asia, emphatically set His seal to the admission of the Gentiles into His Church. His manifest purpose was to have a Catholic, and not a merely national Church.

POINT II.—To insist on circumcision, etc., for Gentile converts would be to annul the grace of God. *We believe, says St. Peter, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.* Both Jewish and Gentile converts could look only to Christ. There was no room, therefore, to go back to Moses.

POINT III.—Reflecting on the full significance of this decision to the Infant Church, remember how easy it is to slip back into seeking to make some compact with God by external acts instead of relying on the mercy of Jesus Christ. Ask yourself, Am I trying to avoid sin and to do my duty, following (so far as you may) “the blessed steps of His most Holy Life” in entire reliance on Him?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for mercy in the Last Day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

JULY 10.

The Man of Macedonia.

READ ACTS XV. 30 TO END.

Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the vision vouchsafed to St. Paul.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be evermore guided by the Holy Ghost.

POINT I.—It is the story of the first Apostolic preaching of the Gospel in Europe. God spoke to St. Paul by a vision. Missionary vocations come now in somewhat similar ways. Spheres of work are pointed out to us in some such visions as this. The important thing is to be ready to welcome and to respond to God's Voice, however He speaks to us.

POINT II.—St. Paul might have said, “With so many heathens in Asia it is impossible to think of embarking on work in Europe;” but no—the original command was to go into all the world. The Church is never really alive unless you can detect her vitality at her extreme frontiers. It is so in the life of a tree.

POINT III.—*She constrained us.* Just one or two converts! Such was the beginning of European Christianity. So missions to-day begin with one or two. It is evermore, *Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.*¹ The Holy Spirit who had prevented St. Paul from preaching in Bithynia and proconsular Asia, was really with him now, though the firstfruits of the harvest were so small.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Patience in your work; listening for God's Voice.

¹ Zech. iv. 6.

JULY 11.

St. Paul in Prison.

READ ACTS XVI. TO END.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene in the lowest depths of the prison at Philippi.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the joy which the world cannot give or take away.

POINT I.—In the lowest prison, with their feet in the stocks, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God. Think of your hard thoughts of God when things have gone amiss with you. God must be praised whatever happens to us: for we must never lose sight of the great truth that *God is love*. This is the weapon wherewith to meet all trials.

POINT II.—*Suddenly there was a great earthquake.* Man's extremity is God's opportunity. It is when things seem at their worst that God intervenes in a way which none can mistake. We must hold on till the *fourth watch of the night*, and then Jesus will come. He has not forgotten us. We must never lose patience.

POINT III.—*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* All this which had happened to Paul and Silas was the means of the conversion and Baptism of the jailor and his house. So God makes our troubles the means of blessing to others. How often sickness in a household makes others tender-hearted and kind! Pray always to learn what God means you to learn by trial.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Rejoicing in tribulations.

JULY 12.

Searching the Scriptures.

READ ACTS xvii. TO v. 16.

They searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

PRELUDE I.—Think of this commendation of the Beræans.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to see Christ in the Old Testament.

POINT I.—St. Paul at Thessalonica and Beræa *reasoned with them out of the Scriptures*. So St. Paul treated the Old Testament as foretelling of a suffering Christ, Who should die and rise again, and that Jesus of Nazareth was in truth He of Whom the Scriptures spake. Christ is the goal of the Old Testament. Everything in it leads up to Him (see ver. 2.)

POINT II.—*They searched the Scriptures*. This shows clearly that we are meant to use our minds to the full. The Beræans were more *noble* because they studied and took pains with the Scriptures. Nothing is more truly profitable than this study. How much time we waste over newspapers and magazines, and worthless and bad books!

POINT III.—*Therefore many of them believed*. Christianity is built upon the fulfilment of hopes and predictions of which the Old Testament is the record. The Seed of the woman, the Great Prophet, the Ideal King, the Suffering Servant—point on to the Redeemer Who is truly God and truly Man, the second Head of the human race, born of a Virgin-Mother.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—More reverence and attention in hearing and reading the Old Testament.

JULY 13.

St. Paul at Athens.

READ ACTS xvii. 16 TO END.

Others said, we will hear thee again of this matter.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul preaching the Resurrection from Mars' Hill.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater faith in Jesus Christ.

POINT I.—The Athenians were “very much given to religion” (not *too superstitious*), but their religion had done nothing to purify their lives. It was largely a worship of physical beauty. Their history shows that great appreciation of art can go hand in hand with moral vileness. Culture is unable to raise mankind.

POINT II.—*And God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.* Here was the very point. Religion must make a moral claim otherwise it is not religion, and the first thing that religion does is to emphasize the sinfulness of sin and the need of repentance. To make light of this is to deny the Gospel.

POINT III.—*He will judge the world in righteousness.* St. Paul ends by speaking of the judgment to come. He Who will come to be our judge is He Who now offers Himself to us as our Saviour. As at Athens so everywhere now—some scoff at this message, others put off attending, and the opportunity passes. Yet God will have the last word.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to pray regularly for schools and universities.

JULY 14.

St. Paul at Corinth.

READ ACTS xviii. TO v. 24.

I have much people in this city.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul's vision of our Lord.

PRELUDE II.—Pray not to give way to depression.

POINT I.—*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.* St. Paul during his eighteen months stay in Corinth was in deep depression. Our Lord encouraged him by a vision. Never *give way* to depression: bring it before God in prayer, and wait quietly and steadfastly on His will. *Be not afraid, but speak.* Go on, that is, with your work, and the light will shine out again. So we are tried and tested.

POINT II.—*For I am with thee.* Often the reason for our depression is first this—that we forget that God is with us! We forget God, and that God is on our side! It is not that God has dropped us, but that we have dropped the hand of God. We are children in the dark, and must hold on to the Hand which guides us.

POINT III.—*For I have much people in this city.* Yes, in this wealthy heathen sinful city of Corinth God had *much people*. Wherever we are there are souls waiting for us, waiting to be helped by us. We must not run away from our post when the temptation to depression comes. Do as St. Paul did—stay as long as God wills you to stay.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—More recollection of God's Presence bringing brightness into life.

JULY 15.

St. Paul at Ephesus.

READ ACTS xix. TO v. 21.

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the burning of the books which had been used for magical purposes.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to cut off occasions of sin.

POINT I.—*Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; but who are ye ?* We cannot take upon us to speak of Jesus unless in our own hearts we are trying to live for Him. “ How can we cast out evil from other hearts unless the Holy Spirit of God dwells in our own ? ” The evils of cruelty, drink, and lust can only be cast out by the pure, the temperate, the gentle.

POINT II.—*The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.* Special miracles, the overthrow of evil spirits, confession of sins—all these characterized St. Paul’s work at Ephesus. In all mission work there is a conflict between God and Satan ; if we work on, it must needs be that the Name of the Lord Jesus will be magnified. Is this your aim ?

POINT III.—*And burned them before all men.* Have we burnt our books ? Everything that leads us from God should be cut off. How much harm evil books do nowadays ! If only a book is clever its wickedness is excused ! But God is not mocked. The flame of evil is soon stirred up within us. In regard to newspapers and books we need to pray, *Turn away mine eyes lest they behold vanity.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Crucify the occasions of your sins.

JULY 16.

Diana of the Ephesians.

READ ACTS xix. 21 TO END.

The whole city was filled with confusion.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene in the theatre.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for habitual calmness.

POINT I.—How did the uproar arise? *Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.* The Gospel touched his pocket. Vested interests! How many now keep the Gospel at arms' length when they sweat their work-people, or buy cheaply at the cost of over-worked men and women, or invest in dishonest businesses! The Christian law should cover our trade, and, indeed, the whole of our life. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* We all have our cries with which we try to stifle conscience. Great is the trade of England! Business is business! Buy in the cheapest market! God looks behind the scenes, and sees the tears of the poor. What standard have we? Is it mere conventionalism, or something higher?

POINT III.—*Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.* Christianity wins its way by preaching the truth. The religious instinct must not be crushed, but rightly directed. In India now we are doing exactly the opposite. We take away the religion the people have, and give them nothing better. This will bring its own nemesis. Better belief in some religion, than an entire absence of reverence and awe.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—The Christian standard must dominate the whole life.

JULY 17.

Sunday.

READ ACTS XX. TO V. 17.

Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene in the upper chamber at Troas.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to spend Sunday rightly.

POINT I.—*To break bread.* No Sunday has been Christianly kept unless we have been to Holy Communion—the Lord's Service on the Lord's Day. We should aim at communicating every Sunday: if that is impossible, we should be present at the Eucharist preparing for, and looking forward to, our next Communion. How about your Sundays?

POINT II.—*Paul preached unto them.* A sermon in connection with Holy Communion is thus an Apostolic institution. Holy Communion and the Word of God—these are the two means whereby our souls are nourished. Because we value the first, do not let us undervalue the second. Sunday is a day for seeing how *much* time we can give to God.

POINT III.—*His life is in him.* Eutychus was brought back to life by St. Paul. It is a parable of what Sunday should do. It brings new life into souls which are tired out with worldly cares. It is a day of spiritual refreshment and rest. It is not enough to *rest*, if we do not *worship* God on that day.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to spend your Sundays better.

JULY 18.

St. Paul at Miletus.

READ ACTS XX. 17 TO END.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul bidding farewell to the Elders of Ephesus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be faithful in the work assigned to you.

POINT I.—*Ye know . . . after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.* St. Paul is able to appeal to the consistency of his life. How often the effect of our words is marred by our lives—defects of temper, or selfishness, or impetuosity! Want of consistency is best cured by prayer. We should do our best to be “always the same” when people come to see us.

POINT II.—*Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Repentance and faith were St. Paul’s chief subjects. It is not enough to have faith in our Lord unless we are striving to hate sin and to be really sorry for our own past sins. Are you trying to deepen your sense of the sinfulness of sin?

POINT III.—*The whole counsel of God.* There are many things which we need not know, and some things the knowledge of which is only harmful. But God’s plan of salvation, our road to heaven, all the blessings Christ has left in His Church—*the whole counsel of God*—the knowledge of this is worth more to us than all else.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Love for the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood.

JULY 19.

The Will of God.

READ ACTS xxi. TO v. 17.

And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene as they tried to dissuade St. Paul from going to Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage to follow conscience.

POINT I.—St. Paul knew, even before Agabus prophesied, that “bonds and afflictions” awaited him (see xx. 22), but he would not be deterred. We must not let the prospect of dark days or troubles of any sort deter us from the path of duty. Go bravely on, looking up to God more and more. We want humility and courage for this.

POINT II.—*We besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.* Friends will often counsel us to take the easier path; but we cannot put our responsibility on any one else. *We* have to decide, and we must not let our own judgment be overridden when conscience seems to be plain.

POINT III.—*The will of the Lord be done.* We must not merely passively acquiesce in the will of God, but do our best actively to co-operate with it. If we remember that God is love, all will be well. By grace God transforms the weak into the strong, the naturally cowardly into the brave. There must be no wilfulness, but self-distrust and reliance on God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Surrender yourself in love to the Holy Will of God.

JULY 20.

In Tumults.

READ ACTS xxi. 17-37.

He was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for calmness.

POINT I.—The plan was that St. Paul should join some Christian Nazarites in keeping their vow, and should pay for the sacrifice they must offer at its conclusion. This was in hopes of removing suspicion from the Jewish Christians. It is our duty to go as far as we can in meeting the wishes or in removing the scruples of others. What says conscience?

POINT II.—Do what we may, we cannot always escape the charge of being a traitor or a heretic, or unkind, or proud. We can but strive to have a conscience void of offence. If we have really done our best we need fear no one. We must not be too sensitive of men's approval or disapproval.

POINT III.—*The multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.* Here St. Paul was sharing in our Lord's Passion. I am "a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people." If human blame is so unfair, shall we lay great store on human praise? Seek "glory" not of men, but of God, Who alone knows the heart. Crush back all wrong ambitions.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aim at calmness in difficulties and obloquy.

JULY 21.

St. Paul's Defence.

READ ACTS xxii. TO v. 23.

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene—St. Paul speaking from the castle steps.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for conscientious adherence to duty.

POINT I.—St. Paul's disinterestedness. Consider what the Apostle had to give up in becoming a Christian. His position in the ecclesiastical world of the Jews was assured as he went to Damascus *to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem*. Henceforth for him there was nothing, in the world, but contempt, obloquy, hatred. What does your religion cost you ?

POINT II.—*When the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death.* St. Paul's conscience would not let him forget his sin: it was not the sin of act but of consent. How is it with you ? Does not conscience witness against you for sins of consent ? The memory of past sin should keep us humble.

POINT III.—*Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.* It was this mention of the Gentiles that the Jews could not bear. *Away with such a fellow from the earth.* Here was the passion of jealousy and hatred leading on to murder. Are you learning to be patient amid clamour, knowing that truth must prevail ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Disinterestedness, and humility of mind amid trials.

JULY 22.

St. Paul before the Sanhedrin.

READ ACTS xxiii. TO v. 12.

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul earnestly beholding the council.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage.

POINT I.—*I have lived in all good conscience.* Both before and after his conversion St. Paul followed his conscience. It was at the dictate of conscience that he had persecuted the Church. But it is our duty at all times to educate conscience. It needs enlightenment. It is not enough to follow conscience unless we are trying to illuminate conscience.

POINT II.—*Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.* Here again the Resurrection is St. Paul's theme. It was Resurrection through Christ and salvation through faith in Him that he preached. It is because of His Resurrection that we hope for our own. Deny that and we deny our hope.

POINT III.—*Be of good cheer, Paul.* As in the shipwreck afterwards, so now St. Paul is cheered by a vision. It was this appearance to which the Apostle must have looked back often and often during the vicissitudes of the next two years. In times of utter darkness and distress, throw yourself back on the experience of the past when the light shined upon you.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—The insignificance of outward circumstances if we are living close to God.

JULY 23.

The Plot to Murder St. Paul.

READ ACTS xxiii. 12 TO END.

Certain of the Jews bound themselves under a curse.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul going by night, under a strong escort, to Cæsarea.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for trustfulness.

POINT I.—We know nothing more about St. Paul's nephew. The Apostle was in imminent peril, and the lad must have risked something in getting to his uncle to tell him of the plot. To be plotted against, to have things said against us behind our backs—all this we may be called upon to bear. Can we look up to God through it all?

POINT II.—*Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix.* The letter was a mixture of truth and untruth. Claudius Lysias took all the credit of saving St. Paul. This is like us when we exaggerate a story or speak of ourselves. Have you always moral courage to speak the exact truth?

POINT III.—Last time St. Paul visited Cæsarea he had stayed with friends who implored him not to go up to Jerusalem. They were fain to break his heart with their tears and entreaties. Now he comes as a prisoner. It wants great trustfulness to commit ourselves to God in all the circumstances of life. Are you learning more childlike trustfulness?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*Though an host of men were laid against me, yet will I not be afraid.*¹

¹ Ps. xxvii. 3.

JULY 24.

St. Paul before Felix.

READ ACTS xxiv.

When Felix came . . . he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Consider St. Paul speaking to Felix about Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to listen to sermons with the intention of profiting by them.

POINT I.—It is quite possible to be interested in religion and yet to be irreligious; to go to Church and to hear sermons, and yet not to amend our lives—this is the common practice of some people. How is it with you when you hear the lessons read, or when you listen to a sermon? Do you ask, “What does God mean me to learn?”

POINT II.—*Felix trembled.* Felix had an interest in St. Paul, though largely a selfish one. However, he must have listened carefully, and as Paul spoke of righteousness, temperance, and a future judgment, Felix’s conscience was pricked, and he *trembled*. Yet what came of it? Remember that, with conscience, *first* thoughts are best.

POINT III.—*After two years! When I have a convenient season!* If only he had asked, “What must I do to be saved?” But no; he hardened his heart, and kept God at arms’ length, and finally thought only of public opinion —*willing to show the Jews a pleasure.* Which will you have, God’s approval or man’s?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Search your conscience. Do what it urges you to do.

JULY 25.

St. James.

READ ST. LUKE ix. 51-57.

Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene at the Samaritan village.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness.

POINT I.—*They did not receive Him.* Our Lord was going up to Jerusalem, and for that reason the Samaritans would not receive him. Learn to bear insults, and scorn, and ignominy without complaining. If you are sincere in praying for humility, remember that humiliations are the road to humility.

POINT II.—*As Elias did.* For rougher times rougher remedies were perhaps allowable. At all events our Lord does not condemn Elijah for his action. He points clearly to a progress in God's requirements of man. More is required under the Christian dispensation than under the Jewish. We shall be judged as those on whom the whole glory of the Gospel has shined.

POINT III.—*Of what spirit ye are of.* The emphasis is on the *ye*. Christ's disciples must wield the weapon of gentleness. Gentleness is real strength. *They went to another village.* Here is our example. Treat the world, not as the world treats you, but as our Lord treated it—with unfailing gentleness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aspire to be truly gentle in thought, word, and act.

JULY 26.

St. Paul before Festus.

READ ACTS XXV.

I appeal unto Cæsar.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the scene.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to act rightly as a citizen.

POINT I.—St. Paul makes use of his citizenship to get justice done him. We have an analogous privilege as members of the vast British Empire. Do we take care that that name should stand everywhere for goodness, and freedom, and equity? It is a duty to give our vote with prayer and with a sense of responsibility.

POINT II.—God had told the Apostle that he should bear witness to Him at Rome. This no doubt influenced St. Paul's decision to appeal to Cæsar. That St. Paul should be judged by a man so utterly vile as Nero is a strange ordering of events. Remember that God's Hand is over all things, and He brings good out of evil.

POINT III.—*If I be an offender . . . I refuse not to die.* Here was St. Paul's courage: he appealed to Cæsar, not from cowardice but for justice. He knew he could expect no justice at Jerusalem. Justice is a sacred attribute of God, and we have to beware of the two pitfalls of partiality and prejudice. *Are you just?*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence for civil government.

JULY 27.

St. Paul before Agrippa.

READ ACTS XXVI.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the scene—St. Paul speaking before Agrippa and Festus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage.

POINT I.—*I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.* In this speech of St. Paul we have, perhaps, the fullest account of his conversion. *I was not disobedient*, implies that he might have been. God did not force even St. Paul to accept His service. How often have we turned aside from the good inspirations God has given us !

POINT II.—*To turn them from darkness to light.* Here is our Lord's own account of what missionary work is. Heathenism is darkness, and the *power of Satan*. For a Christian there can be no question of leaving the heathen to "their own religions." We are faithless if we do not do what we can to promote missionary enterprise.

POINT III.—*I would to God . . . except these bonds.* Here are St. Paul's last recorded words before he is taken to Rome. Contrast Agrippa and Paul. Think of their respective lives, and their influence on the world. Which of us would not willingly share St. Paul's labours and bonds in preference to Agrippa's worldliness and vice ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Cultivate a spirit of detachment from the world.

JULY 28.

The Shipwreck.

READ ACTS xxvii.

So it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

PRELUDE I.—Picture the ship being up and down for fourteen nights.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be kept safe amid the storms of this world.

POINT I.—This world is not a place where we are meant to be at ease and rest. Rather it is a place where we are to expect storms and reverses and sorrows. The enemy of souls is evermore seeking to wreck us, now by open assault, now by secret temptation. The cause of this shipwreck here was the *self-will* of the centurion (see ver. 11).

POINT II.—*There stood by me this night the angel of God, Whose I am, and Whom I serve.* Was this a vision of our Lord Himself? It may have been so. Assuredly He is near us in dangers, as He was near the Apostles on the lake. The practice of the Presence of God is one of the great safeguards amid the storms of the world.

POINT III.—*I pray you to take some meat.* The Christian's food is the Eucharist throughout the voyage of this life. *This is for your health.* It is the medicine of immortality. It is the *esca viatorum*, the food of pilgrims till the haven is reached. It is not an "extra" in the Christian's life, but his weekly or daily bread.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Childlike confidence in God as we pass the waves of this troublesome world.

JULY 29.

St. Paul at Malta.

READ ACTS xxviii. TO v. 17.

They knew that the island was called Melita.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the shipwrecked crew kindly received by the inhabitants.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to recollect everywhere the Presence of God.

POINT I.—The action of St. Paul in casting off the venomous beast from his hand and in healing the father of Publius by imposition of hands and prayer, were manifestations of Apostolic gifts and powers, two of which are stated to have been the “taking up of serpents and the recovery of the sick.”¹ Here was an evidence of Christ’s Presence among the shipwrecked company.

POINT II.—*When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks.* St. Paul was not above gathering sticks for the common need. Wherever we are it is our duty to try to be useful and to think of others. It is a false spirituality which would hold itself aloof from the common duties of life.

POINT III.—*They laded us with such things as were necessary.* “Here are grateful hearts. They could not sufficiently repay the Apostle for his kindness to their sick friends. I wish I was more prompt in remembering the many kindnesses and comforts which I have received from the hands of others.” Oh that my visits might do more good to my friends!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for God’s blessing before you go to visit others.

¹ St. Mark xvi. 18.

JULY 30.

St. Paul at Rome.

READ ACTS xxviii. 17 TO END.

Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul dwelling at Rome.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance.

POINT I.—*We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, etc.* Nothing could have been colder than this reception. St. Paul had looked forward so much to seeing Rome! It is so now. Missionaries find they are not wanted. Their presence excites a languid curiosity—that is all. What a test to our courage and disinterestedness! To find one is not wanted is hard to bear!

POINT II.—He goes on preaching, and opposition comes. So now we are often opposed by those whom we thought would be our fast friends, and we too have to “turn to the Gentiles.” We are not to lose heart because of coldness and opposition. We must look up to God for strength.

POINT III.—*Two whole years.* Two years at Cæsarea, and now two years more in Rome. In both as a prisoner, though in Rome with more liberty. So in our small spheres of work we are set down and tested, while the great world rolls on round about us. In many a small parish by prayer and steady perseverance a great work is done for God, but it is unknown to the world.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Contentment; resignation; courage.

JULY 31.

The Gospel.

READ ROM. i.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul longing to see the Christians at Rome.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage in rebuking vice and witnessing to Christ.

POINT I.—He writes to Rome, the centre of the heathen world ; he longs to preach the Gospel to them that are at Rome ; *he is a debtor both to the wise and to the unwise*. How wonderful is this heart of St. Paul ! How little satisfied was he with anything short of this great desire to win souls ! How ? Simply by the Gospel, which is *the power of God unto salvation* to all alike.

POINT II.—Is not the Gospel power ? “It can make the foolish wise, the sinful holy, the wretched happy ; it opens to mankind a spring of blessing of which nature knows nothing.” We know how it transforms selfish lives into unselfish ones, and leads men by living for God and for others to find their true life. Is not this power ?

POINT III.—*God . . . gave them up to uncleanness.* This is an awful text. There comes a time when the will is so fixed in its antagonism to what is good, that God is said to “give them up.” Let each look into his heart as he reads this terrible indictment of the heathen world, and own his own corruption of heart. *Be not high-minded, but fear.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Hatred of sin ; thankfulness for the Gospel.

AUGUST 1.

Perseverance.

READ ROM. ii. TO v. 17.

Patient continuance in well doing.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the contrast suggested in verses 7 to 10.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to persevere.

POINT I.—There is to be, says St. Paul, a *day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*. This “day” will show that *there is no respect of persons with God*. No external privileges will avail as pleas or excuses. For the present God is forbearing and longsuffering in order that He may lead us to repentance.

POINT II.—*Indignation and wrath . . . upon every soul of man that doeth evil.* We are not to lose sight of the wrath of God. He is not mere benevolence; He does *hate* sin with all the intensity of His Nature. Do we realize this? Do not let us dwell in a fool’s paradise. Let us rather learn to hate sin, and our own sin most of all.

POINT III.—*Patient continuance in well doing, . . . eternal life.* This is what we have to fall back upon. Do not be overwhelmed by the corruption round about. Go on persevering in your duty with a heart growing in the love of God and in the love of man who is the image of God. This can only be by the power of the Holy Ghost, for perseverance is a supernatural grace.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—

“Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear,
And, dear Lord, the chiefest—
Grace to persevere.”

AUGUST 2.

Profession without Practice.

READ ROM. ii. 17 TO END.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the strong indictment which St. Paul brings against the Jewish teachers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sincerity in religion.

POINT I.—The Jew *rested in the law and made his boast of God*, and yet broke the laws by which he bound other men. Here is a weird insight into the practice of those *who sat in Moses' seat!* Nothing that a teacher may *say* can ever make up for slackness in conduct. To teach effectively we must do it by example. What says conscience?

POINT II.—“He is not a Christian, which is one outwardly ; neither is that Christianity, which is outward in the flesh.” To be baptized, confirmed, a communicant—what can this avail unless we are trying to conform our lives to that of our Redeemer in all lowliness and meekness? Often the good heathen put the slack Christian to rebuke.

POINT III.—*Whose praise is not of men, but of God.* For what are we living and working? If for the praise of men, it is but a snare. God, God’s glory, the furtherance of His Kingdom and Will—these are the objects worth living for and working for. Let earthly honour come or not come as God wills.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—I will try to live and work with a more single eye to the glory of God.

AUGUST 3.

Justification by Faith.

READ ROM. iii.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Christ on the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a deeper faith in and love for the Atonement.

POINT I.—There is nothing in ourselves by which we can make our peace with God. Sin has raised a barrier between us and God which we can do nothing to bridge over. We have sinned, and God, being God, must hate sin. What a rebuke to our inadequate view of sin! All the world is *guilty before God*.

POINT II.—We have, then, to look outside ourselves for a Redeemer, and the Gospel good tidings is a revelation to us of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, Whom *God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood*. The “law” only makes our need of such a propitiation more apparent, for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*.

POINT III.—How can we take hold of this propitiation? By the faculty of faith. Faith is the hand that we stretch out to receive this great gift of God; faith is an act of the whole moral being (not merely of the intellect) whereby we lay hold and adhere to a Person—the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a faith which worketh by love.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reflect more and more on the mystery of the Atonement.

AUGUST 4.

Hope.

READ ROM. iv.

Who against hope believed in hope.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Abraham and his faith in God's promises.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to follow in his footsteps.

POINT I.—Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Here is a great example of what we meditated on yesterday. Abraham believed in the word and promise of God. We, too, are to believe on Jesus Christ as having come, on Whom Abraham believed as about to come, for it was through the Christ that all nations were to be blessed.

POINT II.—But faith leads on to hope. It is not the same as hope. The end of faith is sight; the end of hope is enjoyment, fruition. Abraham against natural hope believed in hope supernatural, basing his hope on his faith in God's power and promise. If our faith is not making us hope there is something wrong.

POINT III.—This reminds us that God is a God of promises. He has wonderful rewards laid up for them that serve and love Him—*exceeding great and precious promises* secured to us by Jesus Christ, Who “died (as a propitiation) for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” We are to rest in these promises, and to be hopeful.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reflect on the virtue of hope, and see that your faith leads on to hope.

AUGUST 5.

The Second Man.

READ ROM. V.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

PRELUDE I.—Consider this contrast between the first and the second Adam.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize your union with Christ.

POINT I.—From the first Adam we inherit sin, misery, and death ; from the second Adam we inherit righteousness, happiness, and life. Adam's sin was a revelation of disobedience ; Christ's life and death were a revelation of obedience. The essence of sin consists in wishing to be independent of God.

POINT II.—Humanity made a new start in Christ. He is the Parent of a new progeny—the members of the Christian Church—who derive grace and virtue from Him. They live by Him as the branch lives by its connection with the vine. We are in Christ by supernatural incorporation, as we are in Adam by natural descent.

POINT III.—*We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Christianity raises us into a new sphere—the sphere of grace wherein we stand. From this sphere we can see things in their true proportion. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; but (more than this) we glory in tribulations also, for these shall work in us patience, experience, hope, because the love of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Realize the dignity of the Christian life. Faith leads on to hope, and hope to love.

AUGUST 6.

The New Life.

READ ROM. vi.

Even so we also should walk in newness of life.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a Baptism by immersion.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may have grace to lead the risen life.

POINT I.—The Burial and Resurrection of Christ have their moral counterpart in the lives of Christians. This is illustrated in and potentially effected by Baptism. Therein we die, and sin and the old bad life is buried ; and therein we rise to God and to the new life. It is “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”¹

POINT II.—This involves a redirection of all our faculties of body, mind, and spirit. There is nothing wrong in any faculty which God has given us. The wrong consists in the wrong use of faculties in themselves entirely good. So all our faculties need training and disciplining. *Yield yourselves unto God, . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

POINT III.—This further involves a transfer of allegiance. As baptized persons we are now *servants to God*, and no longer *servants to sin* ; and the outcome or fruit of a life of service to God is not death but life—*eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. The risen life is the only true life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to rise up more faithfully to the responsibilities of the Christian life.

¹ Church Catechism.

AUGUST 7.

The Conflict.

READ ROM. vii.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the conflict ever going on between inclination and duty.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to fight manfully under Christ's banner.

POINT I.—The symbol of the marriage bond has its meaning for the individual Christian: he is “espoused” to Christ, and the more he realizes his oneness with Christ—that Christ really dwells in him and he in Christ—the more surely will he live according to the mind of Christ. He will *bring forth fruit unto God.*

POINT II.—The conflict must ever go on. What the law did was to bring out sin in its true colours—to make it *exceeding sinful.* This at once emphasizes the need of conflict. The conscience is more awake since the giving of a law. We too often drug the conscience and will not let the law speak.

POINT III.—The issue of the conflict is not uncertain for the Christian who fights. It is a fight; *but thanks be to God, Which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,* He fights with us and in us. We have but to lean hard on Him and the victory is ours through His Cross and Passion.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—New courage in the conflict; more reliance on Jesus Christ.

AUGUST 8.

The Flesh and the Spirit.

READ ROM. viii. TO v. 18.

To be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

PRELUDE I.—Consider that we are partly spiritual, partly carnal.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to triumph over sensuality and love of ease.

POINT I.—The lower and the higher nature St. Paul here calls respectively the “flesh” and the “spirit.” We have to die to the flesh that we may live to the spirit ; to die to the lower that we may live to the higher. If otherwise—*if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, i.e. *ye must needs die*—death is the inevitable result of letting the “flesh” have the upper hand.

POINT II.—The Holy Spirit of God dwells in the Christian to help him in his conflict ; nay, Christ dwells in him by His Holy Spirit so that he is *led by the Spirit*. Herein is his safety. He relies not on himself, but on the indwelling Paraclete Whose Presence is secured to him by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

POINT III.—This Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of adoption* through Whose instrumentality we have in Baptism been made sons of God. We address Him as Father, and Jesus Christ acknowledges us as brethren and *co-heirs* with Him. This unspeakable privilege brings suffering here and glory hereafter.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to rise up to the dignity of your high calling.

AUGUST 9.

The Groan of Creation.

READ ROM. viii. 18 TO END.

The whole creation groaneth and travaleth in pain together until now.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the mystery of pain throughout nature.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to cling to God more and more.

POINT I.—The whole creation groans. The condition underlying the fair face of nature is one of war and suffering, animals devouring one another and living by the death of others. Evidently it is a transient condition of things. Some state of things is yet to come, when all will be peace and joy.

POINT II.—*We ourselves.* Man himself is no exception to this rule of pain and struggle. Christians are no exception. All progress—physical, intellectual, moral—is through suffering and struggle and war. Man himself is in a condition of struggle within himself. *We groan within ourselves, waiting. . . .*

POINT III.—What is the answer to it all? *All things work together for good to them that love God.* This is what we know, what we have to cling to—the supreme duty of loving and leaning on God. For He will never leave us unless we leave Him. Predestination, calling, justification, beatitude—these are the steps marked out for us, and God will carry us through unless by our wilfulness we “place a barrier” against Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Indifference to outward circumstances; attachment to God.

AUGUST 10.

God's Election.

READ ROM. ix. TO v. 19.

I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate God's election of the chosen people.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be true to your Christian election.

POINT I.—God elects the few for the benefit of the many. Thus He elected Abraham and his seed that through them He might bring a blessing on the whole world. To the Jews, therefore, belonged the *adoption, the giving of the law, the promises.* They were to be "the school of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life to the whole world."¹

POINT II.—This election was a free act of God. He of His sovereign will passes by Ishmael and elects Isaac; passes by Esau and elects Jacob; and this from no mere caprice. But "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,* because no one except Myself knows who needs mercy." That God does thus "elect" one person to privileges, whether physical or intellectual or spiritual, is obvious.

POINT III.—This will of God is an exhibition of His love, and it demands a response from those whom He elects to privileges. We are elected in Baptism, but we pray that we may "ever continue among God's faithful and elect children."² We may fall from grace.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be not high-minded, but fear. The history of Israel is a warning to us.

¹ St. Athanasius.

² Baptismal Service.

AUGUST 11.

The Potter and the Clay,

READ ROM. ix. 19 TO END.

Hath not the potter power over the clay?

PRELUDE I.—Consider the potter moulding the clay.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to become all that God would have you be.

POINT I.—The imagery is taken from Jeremiah. It is clear from Jeremiah that the clay has freewill. *If that nation turn . . . I will repent of the evil.* God deals with us as we deal with Him. If we turn against Him, as Israel had done, He will *make His power known*, and will deal with us as the potter deals with the clay.

POINT II.—*He endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.* This does not mean that God foreordains men to condemnation; for how could *He endure with longsuffering* such persons? If God endures men with much longsuffering, it is because it is in their power to repent. Think of Judas, and how our Lord *endured him.* Judas had freewill, and need not have sinned.

POINT III.—Yet the facts of man's freewill and of God's foreknowledge must remain in our minds as parallel truths, which, in our present state, we cannot reconcile. We can "neither solve nor ignore" the mystery. What we can do is to realize that we are being moulded by God like clay, and that we *can yield ourselves obediently to His guidance if we will.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to respond to the calling and purpose of God.

AUGUST 12.

The Appeal from the Cross.

READ ROM. X.

All day long have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord on the Cross appealing to men.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may respond to that appeal.

POINT I.—*All day long.* St. Paul is quoting Isaiah, and the words refer to God's longsuffering with Israel. How wonderful was God's forbearance with that stiff-necked people to whom He had vouchsafed a special revelation of Himself! The stretching out of the hands symbolizes God's incessant appeal to them throughout their history.

POINT II.—*All day long.* There was one special day—the day of the Crucifixion—when the Incarnate Son stretched out His Hands on the Cross, appealing to mankind with the appeal of love. It was love for us men which had brought Him from heaven; it was for love of us that He led His suffering life and died His death of shame.

POINT III.—*All day long.* But the Crucifixion is not merely a past event. It denotes a continuous appeal of God to man. To each generation of men is the appeal made, and in each generation it meets with response and with rejection. What is the effect of this appeal upon you? Christ died for you. Are you living to Him?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try to be more truly grateful to God for your redemption.

AUGUST 13.

The Call of the Gentiles.

READ ROM. XI. TO V. 25.

Be not highminded, but fear.

PRELUDE I.—Consider St. Paul claiming to be the Apostle of the Gentiles.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to value your Christian privileges.

POINT I.—St. Paul will not hear that God has “cast away” His people the Jews. He points to Isaiah’s doctrine of a remnant—at this present time also there is a remnant. It is an election within an election. This is in accordance with Jewish history throughout. A faithful remnant has carried on the true tradition.

POINT II.—*By their full salvation is come unto the Gentiles.* The Gentiles having been called, Israelites will be provoked to jealousy; and there will be a great receiving of them back again, which will be like life from the dead. Think of your attitude to the Jews and of missions to the Jews. What is the record of Christendom in this respect? And yet it was from the Jews that Christ came, according to the flesh.

POINT III.—*Be not highminded, but fear.* This is the lesson to draw. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. Do you reflect enough on the fact that the Christian Revelation comes to us Gentiles through the Jews? Our knowledge of God, of the Incarnation of His Son, of all that makes life hopeful, comes from them!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for missions to the Jews.

AUGUST 14.

The Wonderful Ways of God.

READ ROM. xi. 25 TO END.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !

PRELUDE I.—Think of God overruling all things to His glory.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to correspond with the purposes of God.

POINT I.—St. Paul breaks out into this fervid exclamation after he has been writing of the purposes of God in the “hardening” of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles “that he might have mercy upon all.” God’s judgments are beyond our ken, but we know that He is a God of justice and of love.

POINT II.—*How unsearchable are His judgments !* It is the same now. If we look at His dealings with the great nations of the earth now, we can only guess at His ways. They are “untrackable” to merely human foresight. Our care should be to try to see His Hand in all that happens and to adore His goodness. His purposes are ever full of love.

POINT III.—So with our own lives. How He disciplines us ; how He “putteth down one and setteth up another ;” how He overrules all to His glory ; how He draws us to Him by His judgments and by His mercies ; how He checks our wilfulness and our ambitions ! The only thing that really matters is that we should keep a humble heart and remember God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to draw nearer to God.

AUGUST 15.

Reasonable Service.

READ ROM. xii.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the “prayer of oblation ;” “and here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray to give yourself more completely to God.

POINT I.—*Your reasonable service.* God requires no sacrifices of irrational animals, but the self-oblation of reasonable men. The body is controlled by the will, and the Apostle lays emphasis on the body, which is the instrument of the higher faculties within us. God’s manifold *mercies* to us demand this return of all our faculties to Him.

POINT II.—*Be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed.* The words are more significant in the Greek. The first word speaks of outward “fashion,” the second one of a new type. The Christian is to reject the “attitude,” “fashion,” “pose” of this world—*i.e.* organized human society apart from God—and to *metamorphose* himself from within by putting himself under the dominion of a new power.

POINT III.—*That ye may prove—*i.e.* appreciate, discern—what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God.* The Will of God is the ethical teaching of Christianity which is “so excellently good, so acceptable to God, and so perfective of our nature.” Character is based on doctrine, and bears witness to its truth.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of the offering of your *body* to God.

AUGUST 16.

The Christian Life.

READ ROM. xiii.

Owe no man anything, but love one another.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul counselling reverence and obedience to authority.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to fulfil your duty towards your neighbour.

POINT I.—The first duty he insists on is reverence. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. Render therefore to all their dues.* The instinct of reverence needs cultivating, especially among children (and among Englishmen). Disregard of parental or other authority is a bad sign. Examine your responsibilities in this connexion. What says conscience?

POINT II.—The next duty is charity. This embraces everything else. *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* St. Paul here seems to lay all stress on the second table of the Commandments. Why? Perhaps because we can best test our love for God by our attitude and conduct to our fellow-men.

POINT III.—The third duty is self-restraint. *Not in rioting and drunkenness.* He speaks of intemperance in eating and drinking; of impurity; of strife. To avoid all this we need continual self-restraint or temperance in its widest sense. It was this verse (13) which was the means used by God for converting St. Augustine.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence, charity, temperance.

AUGUST 17.

Unselfishness.

READ ROM. XIV. AND XV. TO V. 8.

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

PRELUDE I.—Consider our Lord's life of unselfishness.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more self-forgetfulness.

POINT I.—*The kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* St. Paul takes occasion, from this dispute about Jewish distinctions of meats, to preach unselfishness. Righteousness does not consist in stickling for one's own rights, but rather in self-forgetfulness and thought for others. Abhor self-assertion and self-importance, and be ready to give way to others wherever possible.

POINT II.—*Peace.* After righteousness comes peace. It is this unselfish "righteousness" (by which a man pleases not himself) which makes for peace. It is our duty to set forward as much as we can, "quietness, peace, and love" among all Christian people. Pride, envy, and anger or impatience all tend to destroy peace. What says conscience ?

POINT III.—*Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Out of peace springs joy. Joy is characteristic of the Christian religion. *Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy,* was the first announcement of the Gospel. *There was much joy in that city* was the result of preaching the Gospel in Samaria. By our want of joy we misrepresent Christianity.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Peace and joy come through an unselfish life.

AUGUST 18.

The God of Hope.

READ ROM. XV. 8 TO END.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Reflect upon this prayer of St. Paul for his converts.

PRELUDE II.—Pray this prayer for yourself.

POINT I.—*The God of hope.* Throughout the Bible God shows Himself as a God of hope. After the Fall He did not despair of man. After the Flood—in selecting Abraham; in His bearing with the Chosen People; in His leaving a remnant. After the Captivity—in the promise of a Messiah. From first to last He is a God of hope.

POINT II.—Here is the secret of helping others. To be persistently hopeful about them: never to despair. The people who have helped us most are those who have been hopeful about us: they have “believed in” us and so made us, in a right sense, to believe in ourselves. Our geese must always be swans.

POINT III.—*Through the power of the Holy Ghost.* It is the “power of the Holy Ghost” which alone can raise “hope” from being a mere matter of temperament to a Christian virtue embracing all the powers of the soul—the mind and the will no less than the affections. Hope is a gift of God which we need to pray for and to cultivate.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Never give way to despondency about yourself or any one else.

AUGUST 19.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

READ ROM. xvi.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul twice repeating this blessing (vers. 20 and 24).

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not receive the grace of God in vain.

POINT I.—Grace means help from God given freely (*gratis*) working in the soul of man. This comes to us Christians through the Incarnation and death of Christ. As Christ is *the* sacrament—man veiling yet revealing God—so the sacraments convey grace to His members under outward forms. Thus the sacraments are said to be the extension of the Incarnation.

POINT II.—Grace is the power of a new life. As from the first Adam we inherit sin, misery, and death, so from the second Adam we inherit holiness, happiness, and life. Humanity makes a new start in Christ; and the sacraments convey this grace to us. By faith and love we reach out to God; by grace He stretches down to us.

POINT III.—This grace comes by the power of the Holy Ghost, who energizes in the Church and brings grace to men. We must not separate the thought of Christ from the thought of His Spirit. He is present in the Church by His Spirit. The Church is the Spirit-bearing Body of Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness for the grace of God given so abundantly to you.

AUGUST 20.

Party Spirit.

READ 1 COR. i. TO v. 26.

Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the divisions in the Christian Church.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for charity and forbearance.

POINT I.—Party spirit is contrary to charity. It embitters people, and leads them to think and say hard things of others. It gives a handle for the scoffs of non-Christians. It is a duty to pray for the spirit of Christian love towards those who differ from us. What says conscience?

POINT II.—Party spirit is contrary to humility. “My party” is only an extension of “myself.” Humility lies at the basis of all true advance in Christian life. Pride makes progress impossible. If we are really better informed on religious matters than others, all the more reason for humility, for we shall be judged in proportion to our knowledge.

POINT III.—Party spirit is destructive of Christian brotherhood. *I am of Paul; and I of Apollos.* How can there be unity of action under such circumstances? Anything which tends to split up and to disintegrate the society in which we live is bad, and can only be justified when questions of definite principle are involved.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Watch yourself in regard to your thoughts and conversation about others.

AUGUST 21.

Apostolic Preaching.

READ 1 COR. i. 26 AND ii.

In demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul preaching in *weakness and much trembling*.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for humility.

POINT I.—Consider the manner of preaching. It was *not with excellency of speech or of wisdom*, but it was *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*. This implies not necessarily that supernatural signs accompanied the Apostle's preaching, but that there was in the hearts of all clear proof that the Spirit of God was with St. Paul. Such, in its measure, should all Christian preaching be.

POINT II.—Consider its theme. *Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*. Here was St. Paul's theme. He was not kept back, by fear of men, from preaching the offence of the Cross. It was the “power of God unto salvation,” however much Jews and Gentiles might scoff at it. In thinking of the Incarnation, do not separate it from the Atonement.

POINT III.—Consider its result. *Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called*. Christianity appeals in the first place always to the poor, the weak, the despised. It worked always upwards. It appealed to those who felt a moral want, the sense of sin, the need of a Saviour.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of Christ crucified.

AUGUST 22.

Apostolic Work.

READ 1 COR. iii.

I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the Catholic Church being built up gradually from age to age.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your own work may be acceptable to God.

POINT I.—Man is nothing ; God is everything. It is not *our* work, but God's work. This thought should save us from two dangers : (1) presumption—if we succeed, remember to say often, *Not unto us, Lord, not unto us*, etc. ; and (2) from despondency. God does not ask us for “success”—that is in His hands—but He asks us for faithfulness.

POINT II.—*Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.* This implies that we are to look to God for approval, not to men. He gives His gifts with infinite diversity, and He alone can judge of the use which we have made of them. If we will but put ourselves into His hands, and do our best to respond to His guidance, our “reward” is sure. It is *Himself*.

POINT III.—*The fire shall try every man's work.* There is to be a testing fire at the Last Day. It is an image surely of the glance of God as it pierces through our work. How should we not try to anticipate this fire of judgment, by bringing our work again and again before Him, asking Him to purge it of dross, sloth, and self-seeking !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be more trustful about your work, more steadily hopeful and thankful.

AUGUST 23.

The Clergy.

READ 1 COR. IV. TO V. 18.

Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the clergy as the servants of Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may help them in their work.

POINT I.—“It is not the clergyman’s gifts or talents that we should honour, still less his worldly position, but his office as representing our Lord.” It is as the servant of Jesus Christ, Whose livery he wears, that we should think of him. How wonderful that Almighty God, Who is ever adored by the holy angels, should yet choose men to be stewards of His mysteries!

POINT II.—*It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.* The clergy are not a bit more above criticism than other men; they ought indeed to “commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” But what God requires of them is faithfulness; they must never act with a view to being popular.

POINT III.—*Judge nothing before the time.* Are you careful enough in expressing your opinion about the clergy? The world sometimes flatters them, sometimes calumniates them. They have to care neither for calumny or flattery, but to go on loving God and man for God’s sake. Beware of the critical temperament which so often lapses into cynicism.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember in all your judgments the law of charity.

AUGUST 24.

Hatred of Evil.

READ 1 COR. V.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord's hatred of the least impurity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to hate sin.

POINT I.—Here in the Corinthian Church was toleration of grievous sin. God must hate sin, and our moral nature was intended to reflect God's nature. We must never condole evil, but hate it. *Ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing that is evil.* Love the sinner, but hate the sin.

POINT II.—*To deliver such an one unto Satan.* This means excommunication, accompanied apparently by sickness and death. It was *for the destruction of the flesh*; but the object of this awful punishment was remedial—that *the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* The punishments which come upon us for our sins we must turn into penances.

POINT III.—*With such an one no not to eat.* What if we cannot literally obey this? At all events it should teach us to remember the true enormity of sin in God's sight. The covetous and extortioners are classed together with fornicators! *Be not highminded, but fear!* Are you covetous?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to do something to lessen the amount of sin in the world.

Purity.

READ 1 COR. vi.

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord saying, *Blessed are the pure in heart.*

PRELUDE II.—Pray, “ Make me a clean heart, O God, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.”

POINT I.—*He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.* This is what we have to aim at—union with our Lord Himself—a union of prayer, communion, and love. How terrible to forfeit this for the momentary pleasure of self-indulgence and sin! Companionship with Jesus Christ involves the sacrifice of all sinful pleasure.

POINT II.—*Flee fornication.* This is the ordained remedy for sins of the flesh. Other temptations can be met and faced. But the true heroism in this case is flight. Think of the example of Joseph. Do you scrupulously avoid all occasions of sin? How about the guard over your eyes and thoughts?

POINT III.—*Ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body.* We have been redeemed, body as well as soul. In Baptism the body is consecrated to Jesus Christ; in Holy Communion His Sacred Body and Blood are given to preserve our bodies (as well as our souls) unto everlasting life. Reverence your body as the temple of God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Hatred of the approach of the least impurity.

AUGUST 26.

Celibacy.

READ 1 COR. vii. TO V. 25.

It is good for them if they abide even as I.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul as the ideal missionary unincumbered by domestic ties.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be true to the gift God has given you.

POINT I.—*It is good for a man not to touch a woman.* This means that it is a morally beautiful thing not to marry. A celibate life is not an imperfect life, but a consecrated life. They who are called to it should look upon it as a special sign of God's love towards them. They renounce an earthly spouse to gain a heavenly.

POINT II.—*Every man hath his proper gift of God.*—The power to remain unmarried without sin is a real gift of God, and must be regarded as such. Like other gifts of God, it should be cultivated, for God does not *force* us to do His Will. If any one thinks he is called to the single life, let him make it a matter of thought and prayer, not of talk.

POINT III.—*It is better to marry than to burn.* Anything like secret sin is abhorrent to God. If God gives the call to celibacy, He will give the grace necessary to correspond with the call. How serious and sacred is this subject! How we need to ask, *What wilt Thou have me to do?* Virgin-born Saviour, do Thou teach me!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Honour the holy state of virginity.

AUGUST 27.

Marriage.

READ 1 COR. vii. 25 TO END.

He that giveth her in marriage doeth well.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the sanctity of a Christian marriage.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to honour the married state.

POINT I.—If St. Paul is clear that, in the abstract, the unmarried life is a higher vocation, yet he is equally clear that it is a matter of *vocation*. To those called to the married state, that state is the will of God for *them*. It is a sacramental state shadowing forth the mystical union which is betwixt Christ and His Church.

POINT II.—*It remaineth, that they that have wives be as though they had none.* This does not mean that married people should live as if they were not married (St. Paul condemns this in ver. 5). But it means that whether we are married or unmarried is indifferent compared to the question as to whether we are living holy lives, looking for our Lord's return.

POINT III.—St. Paul ends the chapter by counselling widows not to marry again. They have, however, liberty to do so—*only in the Lord*. Everything, it is clear, will depend upon special circumstances in each case. Prayer is our safeguard. By it we shall be guided on to what is God's Will for us. How this whole question should be prayed over!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence for the married state.

AUGUST 28.

Knowledge and Charity.

READ 1 COR. viii.

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the duty of not wounding another's conscience.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may ever set a good example.

POINT I.—Some could eat meat sacrificed to idols because they *knew* that an idol is nothing; but they would in so doing offend others who had not this knowledge. Therefore it would be better to abstain. So St. Paul teaches, and the principle involved is that charity is above knowledge, and an unselfish act, like such abstinence, would bring its own blessing.

POINT II.—Knowledge disintegrates; it puts one above another, and, *of itself*, cannot tend to edification. But charity does "edify." It unites people by acts of thoughtfulness and kindness. It draws people together. Hence the great value of unselfishness. An unselfish character is welcome everywhere.

POINT III.—*If any man love God, the same is known of Him.* We cannot love man without loving God. Hence charity draws us more and more towards God, for it is *in God* that we love others, and God recognizes our efforts to love Him, and He draws towards us ever more and more.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Love to God; unselfishness towards men.

AUGUST 29.

Self-discipline.

READ 1 COR. ix.

Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.

PRELUDE I.—Think of a race or a football match.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to have a right mastery over your lower nature.

POINT I.—The Christian life is a race, and we must train for it. How? We have to lay aside every needless encumbrance—to practice detachment. This cuts at the root of covetousness and undue love of ease. We must be detached from the world and attached to God—love of God driving out love of pleasure.

POINT II.—*I keep under my body.* Another method of training is by mortification. We are not to allow the body to have all it craves for. By denying ourselves sometimes in things lawful we gain a mastery over the appetites, and are fitting ourselves to meet great temptations. How about your observance of fast-days? Is it real?

POINT III.—*When I have preached to others.* “Who is there whom St. Paul’s fear on this account will not terrify? Can any one pretend, after this, to be saved without penitential exercises? Whoever excuses himself from them, and spares his body under pretence of the labour of preaching, never learned this in the school of the Apostle.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make fresh efforts at self-discipline.

AUGUST 30.

To the Glory of God.

READ 1 COR. x.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the duty of saying grace before meals.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may think more habitually of God's Presence.

POINT I.—The aim of life is the glory of God. It has no other intelligible meaning. We exist, we work, we rest with a view to God's glory. Our recreations also and our meals are with a view to glorify Him. The creature exists for the glory of the Creator ; and so man exists to save his soul by glorifying God.

POINT II.—The motive of life is the love of God. Everywhere we are beset with temptations to act from some low motive of self-interest or selfishness. We must ever be striving to act from the one great motive, viz. the love of God. Disputes such as those among the Corinthians would soon be settled if we could act from this pure motive.

POINT III.—The atmosphere of life is the Presence of God, and the happiness of life is the Will of God. There is no solid happiness save in doing God's Will, and the best way of doing His Will is to strive to be ever conscious of His Presence. How is it with you ? Are you trying to be more recollected ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—The Glory of God, the Love of God, the Will of God, the Presence of God.

AUGUST 31.

Reverence.

READ 1 COR. xi. 2-17.

Because of the angels.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul regulating details of public worship.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a greater degree of real reverence.

POINT I.—*The woman ought to have power on her head because of the angels.* “Power” means the sign of power, *i.e.* of her husband’s power over her. *Because of the angels* means that, though she may despise her husband, the woman will reverence the angels who (the Apostle implies) are present in the Church assemblies. Clearly we should think more of the angels being present in Church.

POINT II.—The expressions of reverence vary at different times and in different countries, but the duty and principle of reverence abides the same. We should follow the customs prevalent in the place and church where we may be. Singularity is nearly always a sign of selfishness and pride. Hence come “contentions” and heartburnings.

POINT III.—Reverence is the feeling and recognition of a greatness above ourselves. How great, then, ought the reverence to be which we feel for God Himself! Yet how carelessly we often address Him! How is it in your private prayers? When alone in church? Before and after service? When you are visiting a church?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Watch yourself in this matter, and pray for the spirit of holy fear.

SEPTEMBER 1.

Holy Communion.

READ 1 COR. xi. 17 TO END.

I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord Himself teaching St. Paul about this Sacrament.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for thankfulness and reverence.

POINT I.—The Corinthians had confused ideas about the Sacrament. The Agape, or love-feast, had been confounded with the Eucharist and celebrated in the evening. St. Paul instructs them on the *awful* nature of the Eucharist. Never let familiarity with It lead you to think lightly of this mystery. How about your preparation and thanksgiving?

POINT II.—*This is My Body.* The union of the outward part of the Sacrament with the inward part is a mystery. The outward part is the bread and wine; the inward part is the Body and Blood of Christ. The union of the two makes the sacrament. Our Lord is present, because His Body and Blood are present under these earthly elements.

POINT III.—*Ye do show the Lord's death till He come.* The Eucharist shows forth the death of Christ in a mystery, both before God and man. It was instituted “for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ.”¹ We should think more of His coming when we attend the Eucharist, and long for Him to hasten His kingdom.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Reverence and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

¹ Church Catechism.

SEPTEMBER 2.

Diversity of Gifts.

READ 1 COR. xii. TO v. 28.

Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.

PRELUDE I.—Consider our dependence upon one another.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for unselfishness and consideration for others.

POINT I.—God's plan in nature is harmony through diversity. This is shown by the differences in colour, form, and character of flowers, plants, trees, etc. No two flowers, leaves, or stones are quite alike. So, too, no two faces or characters are quite alike. Everywhere there is diversity blending into an exquisite harmony.

POINT II.—This law is the same in regard to spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts unequally: one person has what another has not. All have what they have for the good of the whole community, just as the members of the body, having different uses, work together for the good of the whole body.

POINT III.—This should teach us unselfishness and generosity. I have what I have because God wills it; I have not what I have not equally because God wills it. So I learn *contentment*. God is love, and if He had seen that more gifts would be better for me, assuredly He would have bestowed them on me. I should desire to be only that which God would have me be.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to use your gifts to the glory of God and for the good of others.

Charity.

READ 1 COR. xii. 28-31 AND xiii.

And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

PRELUDE I.—Think of this duty of charity as a characteristic product of Christianity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness and forbearance.

POINT I.—It was through want of charity that the Corinthians had exercised their gifts wrongly and vainly. These gifts were very useful, but they were not of the essence of Christianity. But charity is the mind and heart of Christ reproduced in His members. Without this the best gifts are of very little value. One without any of these gifts may yet have the mind of Christ!

POINT II.—*Charity hopeth all things, endureth all things.* This is one of the hardest graces to acquire—to be able to hope always and to endure always. Do you not give way to despondency? to impatience? Why? Because you lack perfect charity, which bears with others and always hopes the best of them. It is hopeful people who help others.

POINT III.—*Charity seeketh not her own.* It is unselfish. We must put away self-seeking and selfish plans and look only to God and to the good of others. What says conscience? *Envieth not.* Are you trying to cut away all envious thoughts which spring from want of charity? The highest standard is set before us in this chapter. We must examine ourselves and see that we aim high.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say the Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday.

Edification.

READ 1 COR. xiv. TO V. 20.

He that prophesieth edifieth the Church.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the practical nature of St. Paul's advice in this chapter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may lead a *useful* life.

POINT I.—We may all of us "edify" the Church of God. St. Paul would have us edify one another by the use of the gifts and opportunities which we enjoy. Ask yourself from time to time, what are you *doing* for the good of others? Count every day lost in which you have not done something to benefit your fellow-men.

POINT II.—This gift of "tongues" was no doubt very fine and astonishing, but St. Paul speaks almost impatiently of it, because it did not lead to edification. What would he say now of things done in church which may be "correct" and showy, but which distress people and do not edify? Here is selfishness again.

POINT III.—If we have to "prophesy," *i.e.* preach in any measure, what pains we should take in making ourselves intelligible to others! Preaching is "speaking to" people,¹ and the object of speaking is to be understood. We must address the *mind*, as well as the affections and will. We must instruct as well as exhort.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Lay out your life before God, and ask Him to use you in His service.

¹ Dupauloup.

SEPTEMBER 5.

Importance of Details.

READ 1 COR. xiv. 20 TO END.

Let all things be done decently and in order.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul regulating the conduct of public worship.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be faithful in your attendance to details.

POINT I.—Life is made up of little things. Little things, therefore, are not unimportant because they are little. The greatest men have most often been men who have paid attention habitually to small details. Genius is to some large extent the capacity for taking pains. The saints have not always done great things, but they have done little things extremely well.

POINT II.—*God is not the author of confusion.* Here is another reason. God's plan is always one of orderliness, and not of confusion. So the planets and stars are in orderly array, and nothing is out of place in God's universe. So it should be with us. Each detail of life should be carefully ordered and thought out. How is it with you?

POINT III.—The value of time is a consideration which helps us to understand the value of trifles. Life soon passes, and the question is whether we are making the best use of the time as it goes. Are you living a regulated life—a life by some sort of rule? Or is it all haphazard and lacking in purpose and order?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve on more careful attention to details which you have neglected.

SEPTEMBER 6.

The Resurrection of Christ.

READ 1 COR. xv. TO v. 35.

If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul insisting on the fact of Christ's resurrection.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for firm faith in the risen Christ.

POINT I.—Some at Corinth denied that Christ had risen. St. Paul tells them that this is to deny the Christian religion—*your faith is vain*. More than two hundred and fifty persons, he says, were alive then who had seen the risen Saviour. He had himself seen Him. Christianity stands or falls with the literal truth of our Lord's resurrection, which is “one of the best attested facts of history.”¹

POINT II.—*Your faith is vain*. Because it should rest on the fact of our Lord's resurrection, and if this fact is denied the whole edifice of faith falls. Faith in the risen Saviour is the means of our justification (Rom. iv. 5). If He did not rise, there has been no atonement for sin, for His death can only have been the death of a mere man. We are unforgiven. *Ye are yet in your sins.*

POINT III.—Christ's Resurrection is the earnest and pledge of our own. Christ is the firstfruits of the great harvest which is one day to be reaped. He has taken away the sting of death: henceforth we look upon it as the passage to eternity. We must therefore live more and more for God, and never let our horizon be bounded by this life. Our real home is above.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness for the Christian's Easter tidings.

¹ Westcott.

SEPTEMBER 7.

Our Resurrection.

READ 1 COR. xv. 35 TO END.

It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption.

PRELUDE I.—Think of your own death.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a joyful resurrection.

POINT I.—*With what body do they come ?* Thou senseless one, says the Apostle, look at nature ! We sow the apparently dead and dry seed in the ground, and behold what a growth springs from it ! The blade, the ear, the full corn. How marvellous is this ! Here is an analogy of what will happen with our poor bodies. *It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption.* The seed can only start into real life by being buried.

POINT II.—*It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body.* The “natural” body now is a clog to the spiritual aspirations of man. After the resurrection it will be like our Lord’s risen Body—a real body, yet a spiritual body, unhindered by the laws of matter. His Body passed through closed doors, and yet, He says, *Handle Me and see.*

POINT III.—*The last Adam was made a Quickening Spirit.* The first Adam hands on animal life to his descendants ; the Second Adam hands on spiritual life. He is a life-giving Spirit because His humanity is united indissolubly to God, and so is life-giving. So the Eucharist is the “medicine of immortality.” We have within us the germ of a new and fuller life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Treasure now the thought of Christ’s life within you.

Obstacles.

READ 1 COR. xvi.

A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul writing from Ephesus, where he was “fighting with beasts” (*i.e.* encountering all kinds of opposition).

PRELUDE II.—Pray for patience and courage amid difficulties.

POINT I.—If we are doing work for God, sooner or later we must expect opposition. Satan will not be slow in taking up the challenge we throw down. We are not to think that God has forsaken us when these things happen. He allows them in order that our faith and endurance may be tried. We must pray for fortitude and untiring patience and charity.

POINT II.—*A great door and effectual.* St. Paul did not run away from his trials; he stayed at Ephesus till his work was done. The temptation to run away may beset us, and we have to be on our guard. Use such times of opposition as opportunities for throwing yourself more unreservedly upon God—His Guidance and Will.

POINT III.—Such seasons are the test, too, of our disinterestedness. They find us out in some selfish or self-seeking scheme. We have been working too little for God, too much for self. What says conscience? Think of the self-effacement of the great Apostle, and begin again with more complete disinterestedness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*

SEPTEMBER 9.

The God of Comfort.

READ 2 COR. i. TO v. 23.

Blessed be God . . . the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul writing this Epistle in much distress of heart.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to look up to God for comfort in all your trials.

POINT I.—St. Paul wrote this Epistle in some city of Macedonia on his way back to Corinth. He had received an account from Titus of the reception of his first Letter to the Corinthians and of the state of the Church there. This report was not very satisfactory. The Apostle is sad at heart still (though to some extent he had been cheered). If you work for Christ, expect trials and difficulties. What is your cross?

POINT II.—*The God of all comfort.* God had comforted the Apostle to some extent by the coming of Titus. He realizes that God comforted him in order that he may be enabled to comfort others. The comfort that God sends us is not for ourselves alone. Are you selfish in the comfort you find in religion? Is there not some one with whom you may share this comfort?

POINT III.—*The testimony of our conscience.* St. Paul more than once speaks of the great need of keeping the conscience void of offence. How can God comfort us unless we are striving to keep the conscience pure and sincere? How is it with you? Pray for *simplicity and godly sincerity* in all your thoughts, words, and actions. Am I deceiving myself?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to lean more simply on God

SEPTEMBER 10.

Personal Affection.

READ 2 COR. i. 23 TO ii. 14.

I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul waiting restlessly at Troas for the arrival of Titus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may use friendship rightly.

POINT I.—Titus was to meet St. Paul at Troas. As he did not come, St. Paul crossed over to Macedonia and met him there, probably at Philippi, from which city he may have written this Epistle. In no other does St. Paul disclose the feelings of his innermost soul so freely (see ver. 4 of this second chapter). God has given us hearts, affections, sympathies, and these are to be rightly exercised in our intercourse with others.¹

POINT II.—Nevertheless, much care is needed in the exercise of affection. St. Paul throughout this Epistlemingles reproof with gentleness. There is no sign of weakness. We have sometimes to be on our guard against the approach of sentimentality, which may easily lead to things which are very bad. Affections, like our other faculties, have to be disciplined.

POINT III.—*I would not come again to you in heaviness.* St. Paul longed to come again to Corinth, but he longed most of all to be able to come with joy, and to find that his converts had been obedient and trustful, for he has to assert his own authority. The way to exercise authority is always by love, but love must expect to suffer: so those in authority must expect to suffer much at times. This must not make us hard.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a right exercise of the affections.

¹ Cp. i. 4.

SEPTEMBER 11.

The Ministration of the Spirit.

READ 2 COR. ii. 14 AND iii.

How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

PRELUDE I.—Think of Moses' face lit up with supernatural light after communing with God.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your prayers may be real times of intercourse with God.

POINT I.—St. Paul contrasts the ministration of the Law with the ministration of grace, the Old Covenant with the New, the letter that "killeth" with the Spirit which "giveth life." The Law, with its stern threatenings of death, was a "ministration of condemnation." The Gospel is a "ministration of the Spirit," Who imparts to the Christian soul the very life of Christ Himself. *Because I live, ye shall live also.*¹

POINT II.—The veil of Moses concealed the Divine light—the "glory" of the Law. The real glory of the Law was that it pointed on to Christ. He was its "end" and "glory;" but the Jews failed to grasp this truth. There was a veil upon their hearts, so that they could not discern the true "end" of the Law. We have no excuse, for we have the key to the Old Testament—Christ.

POINT III.—*We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* "The humblest Christian who looks constantly to Christ as His Redeemer and Exemplar and source of spiritual life, reflects in his own life something of the glory of Christ." This is done by the power of the Holy Spirit as He mellows and transforms our characters more and more.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to respond more to the gifts of grace ministered to you by the Spirit.

¹ St. John xiv. 19.

SEPTEMBER 12.

The Trials of the Apostolic Ministry.

READ 2 COR. iv.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul's ministry so full of anxiety and toil.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for courage in carrying on the work allotted you.

POINT I.—*We faint not.* Twice over in this chapter he repeats the words, *We faint not* (vers. 1 and 16). This implies that there was much which tempted him to faint. The ministry is, doubtless, a burden, a yoke which we must expect to feel heavy at times to the natural man. The greater the glory, the greater sometimes the burden of responsibility. But if God gives us a work, He certainly gives us, with the work, the strength to do it.

POINT II.—*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.* We manifest the "life of Jesus" by being indifferent (so far as we may) to hardship. At least there must be no luxury. Detachment! If the mind and heart are fixed on Christ, learning to love Him above all things, we shall not surround ourselves with needless "comforts." The life must bear some signs of mortification. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*We have this treasure in earthen vessels.* As Gideon's men had their lights in earthen pitchers, we must let the light of Christ shine through us *that the excellency of the power may be of God.* We are nothing in ourselves, but the servants of the people, because servants of Christ, Who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* Are you putting *yourself* forward, or Christ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for perseverance in good works.

SEPTEMBER 13.

The Ministry of Reconciliation.

READ 2 COR. v.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord upon the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love to Him for His atoning work.

POINT I.—God and man were estranged by sin. God's attitude to man was always one of love, but God cannot treat sin as if it were not sin, or welcome the sinner in his sin, for this would be contrary to His holiness. Hence sin was the barrier hindering the outflow of the love of God. God must hate sin, and hence God and man were estranged. Man cannot approach a Holy God in his sins.

POINT II.—Christ on His Cross reconciled man to God. He satisfied in man's nature the Divine law of holiness, and so made propitiation for sin. This He did on man's behalf as the second Adam, the new Head of the race. As gathered up in His Son, God can once more look with favour on the race of man.

POINT III.—*He hath committed unto us the word . . . the ministry of reconciliation.* The clergy have to announce this reconciliation between God and man; it is, indeed, the Good News—the Gospel. They have also to apply its power to individual souls by sacraments and means of grace. In Baptism we are made sharers in His life. Pardon comes through the precious Blood. Spiritual Food is ours in the Eucharist.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness and joy for God's unspeakable gift of His Son.

SEPTEMBER 14.

Holiness.

READ 2 COR. vi. AND vii. 1.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul sketching this outline of the Christian ministry.

PRELUDE II.—Pray never to rest satisfied with the point to which you have already attained.

POINT I.—It is worth while meditating long on the *passive* qualities here enumerated as characteristic of the ministry. *Much patience* and *long-suffering*, as well as the more active qualities, such as *kindness* and *love unfeigned*. Examine yourself in regard to these passive virtues, especially as regards patience. How much those in authority need this virtue!

POINT II.—In the last verse of the lesson he is thinking of all Christians. They are to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*. The higher and spiritual side of our nature has to be cleansed from pride and envy, and anger and covetousness; we must not rest satisfied with cleansing only the sensual or bodily side of our nature.

POINT III.—The object of this cleansing is *perfection*; we are to rest satisfied with nothing less, and that means that we must never rest satisfied with ourselves here below, but ever be pressing onwards. Are your lesser venial sins becoming less frequent? Have you a greater horror of any approach to mortal sin?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more careful about your particular self-examination.

SEPTEMBER 15.

Joy in Suffering.

READ 2 COR. vii. 2 TO END.

I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the joy with which some of the saints have welcomed suffering.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to accept without repining the tribulations which God sends.

POINT I.—*Aut pati aut mori*—let me either suffer or die—was the motto of one of the saints. Such a prayer is, indeed, beyond us ; and yet we may feel that suffering is a mark of discipleship. If Christ suffered we must suffer, and even feel some secret joy that we are called to share in His Cross. What a Cross to have no Cross !

POINT II.—*Without were fightings, within were fears.* This shows how truly the great Apostle shared in the mental and moral strain which, sooner or later, at one time or another, is the lot of all who work for God. Sometimes it is a nameless dread which settles down upon the heart and seems to paralyze effort. It is in the bond : let us face it.

POINT III.—*God . . . comforted us by the coming of Titus.* St. Paul receives comfort from his friends. Thus God comforts us through others. What a consolation to feel that it is in no wise wrong to take comfort in this way ! What a blessing friendship is ! How terrible to be without friends ! Do we think enough of the friendless ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God.*

SEPTEMBER 16.

Almsgiving. (I.)

READ 2 COR. viii.

To their power, . . . and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul setting himself to collect alms for the poor Christians at Jerusalem.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may do your duty in the matter of almsgiving.

POINT I.—Think, first, that the great Apostle was not above undertaking this work of collecting alms. It can never be very pleasant work, and yet it is certainly Apostolic work. He encourages the Corinthians by the example of the Macedonian Christians, who had first given *their own selves* to the Lord, and then their alms: here is the secret of their liberality.

POINT II.—*Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.* The example of our Lord is the motive he appeals to. It seems, indeed, so entirely out of our reach, and yet He Who sets the example gives us also the power to follow it in our measure. Could we do more in this matter? Could we be more regular?

POINT III.—Remember that St. Paul urges almsgiving from the point of view of the good it may do to the giver. *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, is a saying of our Lord which he elsewhere quotes. We should remind people that, in giving, they do good not only to those to whom they give, but to themselves. It makes us less selfish and more loving.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Review your practice of almsgiving.

SEPTEMBER 17.

Almsgiving. (II.)

READ 2 COR. ix.

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the poor Jewish Christians needing alms.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a liberal heart.

POINT I.—*The ministering to the saints.* The Christians in Jerusalem needed alms, because in becoming Christians they often lost their employment. The reason why we are niggardly is often because we have not heard of the wants of others: but do you attend at once, and always, to those whom you know need your help? How many appeals have you thoughtlessly set aside? How little excuse there is for this!

POINT II.—*God loveth a cheerful giver.* We must not give grudgingly. Each real appeal on behalf of a good object is an opportunity. If we give according to our power, all will be well. God “takes no account of the number of coins, but of the giver’s heart. He has no need of our money, yet He will not forget any offering that love makes.”

POINT III.—*It is abundant by many thanksgivings unto God.* The Jewish Christians who were to receive the alms would be stirred up to thanksgiving. So now distant missionaries and their converts are cheered and encouraged by being remembered at home in our prayers and by our alms. So a bond of love is formed between those who would otherwise be separate.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—

“He only who forgets to hoard
Has learned to live.”

SEPTEMBER 18.

How to meet Opposition.

READ 2 COR. x.

Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul asserting his Apostolic authority against the Judaizers.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness in controversy.

POINT I.—*I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* The first weapon against opposition is the weapon of gentleness. There is always a power in real gentleness, because it implies self-restraint. God deals with us men by gentleness—*Thy gentleness hath made me great*¹—and it is our best way of dealing with others. So St. Paul here reminds his converts of *the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*

POINT II.—*Casting down imaginations, . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* The imagination and the thoughts. These are the “strongholds” which so often exalt themselves against Christ. To control them is no small part of the Christian’s warfare, and not least is this the case if we are obliged to engage in religious controversy. How about your thoughts and imaginations?

POINT III.—*He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* St. Paul’s opponents were boasting in the fruit of his labours. The Corinthian Christians had been converted by St. Paul’s labours, and now these Judaizers claimed them, and boasted of them as theirs. They were *comparing themselves* among themselves, boasting of themselves and their own “denomination.” How hollow is all this! Our work is God’s work; to Him be the glory!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for gentleness, humility, and singleness of purpose in your work.

¹ Ps. xviii. 35.

SEPTEMBER 19.

St. Paul and the Judaizers.

READ 2 COR. xi. TO V. 30.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul obliged, against his will, to assert his Apostolic authority.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for wisdom and charity in dealing with separatists.

POINT I.—*Bear with me a little in my folly.* What is this “folly”? It is his self-assertion in this chapter. His claim that he was not behind the chiefest Apostles, that he had not been chargeable to the Corinthians, that he was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, that he was more abundant in labours, in persecutions more frequent. When you speak of yourself and your doings, is it only because you are *obliged*? Examine yourself on this point.

POINT II.—*I reckon that I have not fallen short in any respect of the very chiefest Apostles.* The only fault they could find with St. Paul was that he was *rude in speech*, and that he had not taken any pay. It is well to ask ourselves sometimes whether we have given any handle to our opponents. Are you quite guiltless in this matter?

POINT III.—*Ye suffer fools gladly.* The Judaizers bring you into bondage, and put a yoke upon you, devour your money, and insult you. Let me say that I have a far better claim than they upon your love and allegiance—my labours prove it. Let those of us who are teachers realize that we, like St. Paul, must give evidence of our Apostolic descent by living in the self-denying spirit of this great Apostle.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember to expect opposition. Pray to meet it with discretion and charity.

SEPTEMBER 20.

Apostolic Authority.

READ 2 COR. xi. 30 TO xii. 14.

In nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul having to vindicate his authority.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for unwearying patience.

POINT I.—He had had his share of visions and revelations. He mentions them, but he will not “boast” of these or vindicate his authority by them. He would rather speak of, and glory in, his infirmities. At any time we may be in danger of spiritual pride. If God vouchsafes us special comfort in prayer and sacrament, let us be very careful how we speak of such.

POINT II.—*There was given to me a thorn in the flesh.* To St. Paul, *lest he should be exalted above measure*, was sent some painful infirmity, some bodily ailment—weak eyes, perhaps—which hindered his work. This kind of trial comes to many of us. If it is not removed, remember the words, *My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*

POINT III.—*When I am weak, then am I strong.* Here is a Christian paradox. When we lean on God we are strong; and remember that St. Paul puts *first* among the *signs of an apostle*, the grace of *patience*. How often in the exercise of authority we fail for lack of this *sign*! Bodily weakness and patience; how much have they accomplished for God!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—In exercising authority lean on God and learn patience.

SEPTEMBER 21.

Gentleness.

READ 2 COR. xii. 14 AND xiii.

I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul making a last effort, as he ends his letter, to win the recalcitrant by gentleness.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness and sympathy.

POINT I.—In these verses we have a wonderful insight into St. Paul's tenderness of heart and his intense sympathy. *I seek not yours, but you.* He must win them to God through his tender-hearted sympathy and compassion. If only I could thus deal with those who oppose me. How does conscience accuse me of roughness and pride and want of tenderness?

POINT II.—*And this also we wish, even your perfection.* Here are some beautiful words—“I wish that in ruling over others I had more of this spirit. I should have done better if I had sought their good in all simplicity, and not thought so much of my own dignity. The perfection of these with whom I am should be my prayer.”

POINT III.—*The God of love and peace shall be with you.* What a benediction is this! If we live in peace, and do all we can to promote goodwill and harmony, then the God of love and peace will be with us. Such a life as this can only come by the power of the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ. A really Christ-like atmosphere will spread itself round about us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.*

SEPTEMBER 22.

The Galatian Church.

READ GAL. i.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul beginning this Epistle alone with no word of commendation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more personal love to our Lord.

POINT I.—One outstanding phenomenon of the evangelization of Galatia had been the illuminating power by which Christ crucified had been preached—*evidently set forth crucified*—among them (iii. 1). Yet now they were obscuring this Gospel by insisting on Jewish ordinances. Has anything taken the place of personal love to Christ crucified in your heart?

POINT II.—Another phenomenon was the spiritual power bestowed upon the Galatians. They had begun their Christian life in the Spirit (iii. 3). There had been among them a fulness of spiritual joy and peace. Yet this was now being neutralized by external ordinances. Is anything taking the place of spiritual power in your life? Are your prayers and services *alive* with spiritual energy?

POINT III.—*Another Gospel.* St. Paul had received his Gospel from the Risen Lord Himself. There is such a thing as loyalty to revealed truth. The Christian religion is based on the Revelation of the Name of Jesus Christ, Who is our life and joy, and in Him is our only hope of salvation and eternal life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make your religion more vital, less mechanical.

SEPTEMBER 23.

The Crucified Life.

READ GAL. ii.

I am crucified with Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord upon the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to enter into this language of St. Paul.

POINT I.—St. Paul later on says that *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.*¹ He refers to some definite moment in the past. At our Baptism we were potentially nailed to Christ's Cross. Every faculty in us has to be trained and disciplined, nothing broken, but everything disciplined. How is it with regard to your affections, thoughts, senses? Can you begin to use this language of St. Paul?

POINT II.—Crucifixion was slow death; nailed to the cross and then left to die. So our moral crucifixion is slow work; but is it gradually being accomplished? Every time of retirement, every retreat, every Lent, is a time for seeing whether the nails hold. How slowly do we die to what is wrong! Jesu, have patience!

POINT III.—*Christ liveth in me.* It is a death to the lower in order that we may live to the higher; a death to self, a life to God; Christ Who gave *Himself for me* in Atonement, lives within me. I have but to draw upon this Power within me by acts of faith and love.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Go back in thought to your Baptism, and renew your vow of renunciation.

¹ Gal. v. 24.

SEPTEMBER 24.

The Robe of Christ's Righteousness.

READ GAL. iii.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Baptism of a child.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to rise up to the responsibilities of your Baptismal gift.

POINT I.—All that the law could do was to reveal sin in its true colours. It could *disclose* sin, but not remove it. Every time the Commandments are read we feel our inability to keep them in their inner spirit as we should. This sense of inability and guilt forces us to look out of ourselves to Christ. They thus lead us to Christ.

POINT II.—Christ both kept the law perfectly, and also suffered the penalty due to man for his disobedience. *He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin.*¹ His unutterable love for us drew Him so to give Himself up for us. *Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* We want to have more love for Christ crucified.

POINT III.—But Christ is not merely outside us. At our Baptism we *put on Christ*. The robe of His righteousness was given to us. What care should we take never to soil this white Baptismal robe of our justification ! When we *put on Christ*, His life passed into ours ; we are in Him, and He in us. If the robe has been soiled, it must be washed anew by penitence in the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—A fervent desire to keep pure the Baptismal Robe.

¹ See 2 Cor. v. 21.

SEPTEMBER 25.

Christian Sonship.

READ GAL. iv. TO v. 21.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.

PRELUDE I.—Think what it means to address God as our Father.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize the blessings of Christian sonship.

POINT I.—*God sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons.* We share in Christ's sonship. He is the Eternal Son Who became man, and Who unites us to Himself. We are sons of God because we are the brethren of Christ. We are adopted into His Family, the Family of the redeemed children of God—redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

POINT II.—*God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.* Sharing His sonship we have a supply of His Spirit, and it is only by the Spirit that we are enabled to pray. It is the Holy Spirit Who prays in us and for us. By Him, in the power of the Spirit, we can say, Abba, Father. Do you think of the Holy Spirit when you pray?

POINT III.—*Thou art no more a servant, but a son.* We must approach God, speak to God, serve God, not as slaves, but as sons, as children of God at home in their Father's House, at their Saviour's Altar. What a difference it makes whether we do our work as if it was a task set by a master, or as a service which we gladly render to our Father in heaven!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to live more in the spirit of a child of God.

SEPTEMBER 26.

The Two Covenants.

READ GAL. iv. 21 TO v. 13.

These are the two covenants.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Abraham casting out Hagar and her son.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to understand aright the inner meaning of this Old Testament scripture.

POINT I.—St. Paul dwells on the inner spiritual meaning of this Old Testament story. The covenant of Sinai was to give place to the covenant made in Christ's Blood—the covenant of the new Jerusalem. The one was a covenant of law, the other a covenant of grace. The one was transitory—a yoke of bondage, the other was eternal—a life of liberty.

POINT II.—*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.* Christ has made us free from the bondage of ceremonial law. We are not “under law,” but “under grace.” “Grace” is God’s goodwill showing itself in beneficent action towards us. It is the work of His Holy Spirit within us. Are you responding to this grace of God?

POINT III.—*Faith which worketh by love.* God’s service is not one of bargained agreement—the doing of certain acts of external conformity, like circumcision—but it is the loyal acceptance of the position of sonship. We must rise up by faith and love to live in all the power of this new covenant of grace.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a sense of real supernatural joy in the free service of Jesus Christ.

SEPTEMBER 27.

The Fruit of the Spirit.

READ GAL. v. 13 TO END.

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the need of self-discipline in view of our fallen nature.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may *walk in the Spirit.*

POINT I.—The *Fruit of the Spirit* is susceptible of a threefold division. *Love, joy, peace*, speak of our relation to God. The First Commandment is to love God; the expression of this *love* shows itself in the *joy* which the saints experience; and the effect of *love and joy* is the presence of a supernatural *peace* within the soul.

POINT II.—*Long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.* These three speak of our relation to others. The opposite to them all is the temptation to impatience, to irritability, to be overbearing, rough. If we really love God we shall be kind, gentle, and long-suffering to those round about us. What says conscience?

POINT III.—*Faith, meekness, temperance.* This speaks largely of our relation to ourselves. *Faithfulness*: we must be true to conscience and its demands, reliable. We must keep to the clear line of duty fearlessly, yet with meekness and self-restraint. In self-restraint there is real power. How about your “temperance” in things lawful?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to manifest in your life the Fruit of the Spirit.

SEPTEMBER 28.

Perseverance.

READ GAL. vi.

Let us not be weary in well doing.

PRELUDE I.—Think of life as a race that is still going on.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of final perseverance.

POINT I.—Perseverance is not “natural” to man. Man left to himself “naturally” deteriorates. Only religion and the grace of God enable men to keep up a high standard of living. Similarly in our work in life. We have to fight against the natural tendency to indolence—a tendency which sometimes increases as life advances. There is need of sustained effort.

POINT II.—But this sustained effort is made up of a series of fresh beginnings renewed day by day. We shall reap in due season *if we faint not*. We do not know how far off the *due season* may be, but we do know that God will never ask of us any effort for which He does not at the same time give us sufficient strength.

POINT III.—*The marks of the Lord Jesus.* These marks may mean the brands which slaves bore indicative of the name of their owner. We are Christ’s bond-servants, but His service is “perfect freedom.” There is no real happiness in life except that of striving in all things to do His Will.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—

“Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear;
And, dear Lord, the chiefest—
Grace to persevere.”

SEPTEMBER 29.

The Holy Angels.

READ REV. xiv. 14 TO END.

The harvest of the earth is ripe.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene described in this chapter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray—

“O Holy Awful Reaper,
Have pity in that day
Thou puttest in the sickle,
And cast me not away.”

POINT I.—This reaping of the earth reads like a reminiscence of our Lord’s explanation of the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat. The angels are ministers of God’s wrath as well as of His mercy. Do I think enough of the awful mystery of the Last Day, the Day of Judgment? Let the harvest bring the truth home to my mind.

POINT II.—There are guardian angels all around me helping me onwards towards what is right, drawing me away from what is wrong. How near the unseen world really is! How thin the veil between time and eternity! Do I think enough of this guardianship of angels, of my own special guardian?

POINT III.—I am to be like the holy angels if I attain to the resurrection of the just! I am to do God’s Will with a perfectly fixed will. I shall not be able to sin because I *will* not sin. The time of my probation will be over! I shall rest, yet I shall rest *not* from God’s perfect and untiring service. This is life eternal.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say often the Collect for St. Michael’s Day.

SEPTEMBER 30.

Life in Christ.

READ EPHES. i.

He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

PRELUDE I.—Think of your union with Christ in Baptism.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize your life in Christ more deeply.

POINT I.—St. Paul makes it plain in this chapter that redemption from past guilt is but the prelude to a life lived in Christ. We can never rightly separate Christ's work for us from Christ's work in us. He Whom we outwardly behold as our Example and Atonement outside us, is within us as the principle of a new life.

POINT II.—*Sealed with the Spirit of promise.* Incorporation into Christ is associated with Baptism, sealing with the Divine Spirit is associated with the laying on of hands. It is of a given moment in the past that the Apostle speaks. It is the Holy Spirit by Whom we are united to Christ and by Whose operation the Christ-life is continued in us.

POINT III.—*That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.* Nowhere perhaps are the glories of the Christian life and hope set forth in more glowing terms than in this passage. Already we are lifted up to the heavenly place in Christ, already our "conversation" is not below, but above—and all this is but the prelude to far greater things to come!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness for God's pre-destinating purpose and love for you.

OCTOBER 1.

Redemption.

READ EPHES. ii.

By grace are ye saved through faith.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the predestinating love of God in redeeming you by Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to walk worthy of your calling.

POINT I.—*For His great love wherewith He loved us.* God's motive in Creation was love ; His motive in redemption is love. Being God, He could not ignore sin or treat it as if it were not sin. We were alienated from Him by sin—*children of wrath*—but objects of His pity; and Christ, by dying in our nature and on our behalf, satisfied the Divine law of holiness and became our propitiation.

POINT II.—*He hath quickened us together with Christ.* At some given point in the past, *i.e.* at our Baptism, He brought us into contact with the life which has triumphed over death, and in proportion as we assimilate the powers and forces of that new life which throbs within us, we are living as we ought. God sees us in Christ, “not as we are, but as we are becoming.”

POINT III.—*Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in.* The Divine predestination is not a mere general purpose, but it extends to details. We must apply it to the details of our life and work, and respond to its call. In what “good works” is my life being spent? How do I thus exhibit the Christ-like spirit?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—The joy of a Christian in virtue of his redemption.

OCTOBER 2.

Strength and Love.

READ EPHES. iii.

To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the glowing brotherhood of love in the Early Church.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a fuller manifestation of this brotherly love now.

POINT I.—*Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.* Christ dwelling within us is the secret and source of all true strength. It is when we forget Him and His power within us that we fail of real strength and run into sin. More prayer for the Spirit would make us stronger Christians living in constant union with Christ—strong against temptation.

POINT II.—*The breadth, and length, and depth, and height, i.e. of God's purpose and love.* The breadth—it reaches out over the whole universe. The length—God's purpose is from everlasting. The depth—His love reaches down to us being dead in trespasses and sins. The height—it takes men up to heaven. The redemptive love of Christ knows no limit.

POINT III.—This love is to be mirrored forth among us Christians in our intercourse one with another. “Christianity contains within itself the remedy for social evils because it has the spirit of love.” But how frost-bound our love often is, and how little we represent the social and brotherly aspect and power of the Church! Let us pray this prayer of St. Paul in the closing verses of this chapter.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to display more energetically the spirit of Christian brotherhood.

OCTOBER 3.

The Unity of the Church.

READ EPHES. iv. TO v. 25.

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.

PRELUDE I.—Consider how earnestly St. Paul exhorts his Jewish and Gentile converts to unity.

PRELUDE II.—Pray ever to work and pray for the reunion of Christendom.

POINT I.—The Unity of the Spirit is the fundamental unity of the Church. Christians are one because they share in a common life—the life of the Spirit, the life of the second Adam. The same life-blood, so to speak, flows in their veins from the same sacramental channels. In Baptism we are united to Jesus Christ and share His life.

POINT II.—This unity is further strengthened and cemented by Confirmation, and specially by Holy Communion. We are all partakers of the One Bread. This unity is based on the One Faith, and in this common Faith we are members of one another because we are in Christ—the One Lord.

POINT III.—This fundamental *unity of Spirit* ought to manifest itself in brotherly love and charity—the *bond of peace*—and this is what St. Paul exhorts the Asiatic Christians to strive after—endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Interruptions of intercommunion do not destroy the fundamental unity of Spirit, but they miserably mar the aspect and cripple the work of the Church. They are like quarrels in a family; the members are still one in blood, though they quarrel.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Strive after graces which make for unity—humility, meekness, love.

OCTOBER 4.

Children of Light.

READ EPHES. iv. 25 to v. 22.

Walk as children of light.

PRELUDE I.—Consider this exhortation of St. Paul to walk as children of light.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a spirit of detachment from the world.

POINT I.—The strife between good and evil is like a strife between light and darkness. Christ is the Light of the world ; His disciples are children of light. To walk in the light is primarily to love what is good and to hate the evil. There is no middle position, and our consciences tell us that we need to grow in real hatred of what is wrong if we would walk in the light.

POINT II.—True “enlightenment,” therefore, is fundamentally an affair of the heart and the will. *Let no man deceive you, St. Paul says, with vain words.* If books are bad it is no excuse for them to say that they are “powerful.” Curiosity about evil is sin or must surely lead to sin. *I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*¹

POINT III.—*Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.* St. Paul here and elsewhere classes together gross fleshly sins and lawless grasping at money. Why? Because “the lawless grasping after gain and the lawless grasping after pleasure are the two great perversions of the human soul. Pleasure and mammon are the two typical idols.”²

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of the *power* of a single-hearted Christian life.

¹ Rom. xvi. 19.

² Bishop Gore.

OCTOBER 5.

Human Relationships.

READ EPHES. V. 22 TO VI. 10.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

PRELUDE I.—Think how Christianity permeates every detail and relationship of life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to keep up to a high Christian standard in your home life.

POINT I.—Christ loved the Church; gave Himself for her; and this for the purpose of making her pure and spotless. So is the ideal husband to love his wife; to sacrifice himself for her; and to have ever before him the aim of moral perfection for himself and his wife. The conjugal union is thus a symbol and sacrament of the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church.

POINT II.—*Children, obey your parents in the Lord.* This is a “commandment standing first accompanied with promise,” i.e. it stands first among those that refer to our neighbour. So far as filial obedience is waning among us, there is serious danger ahead. It is a duty to do all we can to foster among children love and reverence for parents. How about your own case?

POINT III.—*Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.* They are not to irritate or to over-stimulate them lest they should lose heart. There is great need for parents to pray to be guided wisely in regard to disciplining their children. The danger now is lest they should leave all discipline to schoolmasters. This is to neglect a solemn duty. *Nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve on carrying out your home duties better.

Spiritual Strength.

READ EPHES. vi. 10 to END.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul reverting at the end of this “social” Epistle to the inward spiritual struggle.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to fight manfully to the end.

POINT I.—*Be strong.* He refers not to physical strength, though we have a responsibility here; nor to mental strength, though endowment of mind must be used and developed; but to moral and spiritual strength. He would have us aim at being men and women of strong character—strong because relying on God and cherishing character above all other gifts. Do you aim at this?

POINT II.—For this struggle we have to take up or “put on” the whole armour of God. There are evil spirits against whom we fight. The belt of truth, singleness of aim, which keeps everything else in place. The breast-plate of Christ’s righteousness. Feet shod with the *preparedness* of the Gospel of peace, ready to move and act according to God’s Will, having peace at heart.

POINT III.—*The shield of faith* to protect ourselves against evil suggestions, ever glancing up at Christ. The *helmet of salvation* (which Christ has wrought for us) will protect us from attack. And God’s Word is to be with us as a sword. The words of Holy Scripture will recur to our minds when we most need them, if only we will read and meditate on Scripture.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember that *praying always* is what really enables us to use this armour.

OCTOBER 7.

Largeness of Heart.

READ PHIL. i.

*Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth,
Christ is preached.*

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul writing this Epistle from his prison in Rome.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gladness of heart amid whatever outward difficulties.

POINT I.—There is a wonderful ring of joy about this Epistle. It is largely because St. Paul has risen superior to outward circumstances. He is thankful, and confident, and glad, and prayerful, and triumphant—in nothing terrified. There is no greater witness than this Epistle of the power of the Gospel to transform distressing outward circumstances into blessings.

POINT II.—This is greatly due to St. Paul's largeness of heart. The news of the Gospel had spread even to the Emperor's palace; and though the Gospel was preached sometimes of *envy and strife*, in opposition and without sincerity, yet he rejoiced. Here is an example of largeness of heart, of freedom from every taint of envy. What says conscience?

POINT III.—Life or death were all one to St. Paul. His one desire is that “Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death.” It is this great aim—the glory of God in Christ—which really gives him power to rise above outward circumstances. If we are conscious of having no other aim, all life becomes simplified and full of joy.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aim at this generosity, this singleness of purpose.

OCTOBER 8.

The Self-emptying of Jesus Christ.

READ PHIL. ii.

He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the humiliation of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of humility.

POINT I.—*Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory.* Vain-glory, which is a manifestation of pride, is the great enemy of real humility. Humility, says St. Augustine, is the love of God reaching to the contempt of self. Pride is the love of self reaching to contempt of God. What is this but vain-glory? *In lowness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.*

POINT II.—*He humbled Himself.* In becoming man Jesus Christ did not cease to be God. He laid aside the exercise (within the sphere of the Incarnate life) of those attributes which belong to God, and was found in fashion as a Man. He Who from all eternity was God, took human nature upon Him, and was born of the Virgin-Mother as very Man.

POINT III.—This is to be our example. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* We can never attain to this, but we must have a high aim. Remember that “humiliations are the road to humility.” So do not be resentful when humbled, but be thankful to have the opportunity of showing meekness. Humility is the recognition of our own nothingness and sinfulness.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to lay the foundations again in humility.

OCTOBER 9.

Reaching Forward.

READ PHIL. iii.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul near the end of his life confessing he had not yet attained.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to press onwards in your Christian calling.

POINT I.—“No one is good save he who is striving to become better,” says St. Bernard. This is only another way of saying that there is no standing still in the Christian course. We are like men rowing against the stream ; if we rest on our oars we begin to go back again. How often have I done this ? There is need of daily perseverance and effort.

POINT II.—*What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* Here is the secret of success. Christ is the great prize to be won, and in winning Him everything that hinders us must be cast aside. In St. Paul’s case it was worldly honour and reputation which had to be sacrificed. Is it so in yours ?

POINT III.—*That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.* How ? By knowing the fellowship of His sufferings, and being made conformable unto His death. Think, these are the words of a saint ! What a rebuke to our easy-going Christianity, to our seeking a crown without a cross ! No cross, no crown. To rise with Christ, we must be crucified with Him.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Take up your cross and go bravely on, *looking forward.*

OCTOBER 10.

Christian Joy.

READ PHIL. iv.

Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice.

PRELUDE I.—Think again of the triumphant tones of this Epistle written from prison.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for true-hearted Christian joy.

POINT I.—*Rejoice in the Lord alway.* A Christian has, in a certain sense, the right to be light-hearted as no one else has. He is a redeemed man. The great realities to him are the truths of the Gospel and the knowledge of God's love for him, "the means of grace, the hope of glory," which come to him through "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ All this lifts him up above exterior trials.

POINT II.—*Let your kindly considerateness be known unto all men.* His own joy is never selfish; he is kindly and unselfish towards others. He is never *anxious*—"be careful for nothing"—but always trusting in the goodness and love of God, speaking to God in prayer and thanksgiving about everything. He has God as His Friend and Father, and trusts Him as a child.

POINT III.—*The peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts and minds.* This is the result—the peace of God keeps guard over his heart and *thoughts*. There is peace for the Christian even in the midst of strife—a peace at the bottom of the soul which is nurtured by recollectedness and prayer. War yet peace; sorrowful yet always rejoicing.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to exhibit in your life this Christian joy.

¹ General Thanksgiving.

OCTOBER 11.

Christ our Redeemer.

READ COL. I. TO V. 21.

By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.

PRELUDE I.—Reflect upon our union with God through Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may grow in devotion to Christ crucified.

POINT I.—*By Him were all things created.* Christ is the Logos—the *Image of the invisible God*—and He was the Agent in creation. All things came into being through Him. More than this—*By Him all things consist*, i.e. it is through the Logos that the universe holds together. Meditate on this mystery of the work of the Logos in creation and conservation.

POINT II.—*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.* Why was this “deliverance,” this “redemption,” necessary? Because man’s sin had interposed a barrier between God and man, so we had to be *rescued* by the Blood of Christ Incarnate, Who secures for us by His death the *forgiveness* of our sins. Meditate on the alienation which sin causes.

POINT III.—*Having made peace through the blood of His Cross.* Scripture reveals to us that the death in our nature of the Logos is the objective ground on account of which God, on our repentance, forgives sin. Peace between God and man is thus secured. This is the most precious gift man can have, for in union with God our eternal life consists. Have you this peace?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve by penitence to secure and evermore keep this peace with God.

OCTOBER 12.

The Christian Life.

READ COL. i. 21 TO ii. 8.

Christ in you, the hope of glory.

PRELUDE I.—Meditate on the glowing words in which St. Paul speaks of the mystery of redemption.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to realize and live in the thought of Christ's presence in your soul.

POINT I.—This *mystery*—this truth hitherto hidden but now made known to men—of Christ's redemptive work it was St. Paul's mission to preach. He preached not a Saviour outside us, but One Who unites Himself to us, and lives in us so that we share His life and live in His Spirit.

Christ in you, the hope of glory.

POINT II.—*Whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man . . . that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.* Here was St. Paul's method and aim. Preaching, teaching, warning—that is his method. To present every man perfect—that is his aim. What a wonderful and high aim! Yet how easily do we take our Christian obligations!

POINT III.—*Rooted and built up in Him.* It is not enough to be a Christian; we must be growing Christians—waxing riper and stronger in our Christian life as the years speed along. This is the teaching of the saints. How we need to cry for mercy for our slackness, our slothfulness, and want of zeal!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for growth, zeal, and perseverance.

OCTOBER 13.

True Religion.

READ COL. ii. 8 TO END.

In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the Colossians drawn away from Christ by angel-worship and vain deceit.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to lay hold on Christ and never to let Him go.

POINT I.—The false teachers had drawn away the Colossians from Christ to a system of angelology and external observances. Remember all external observances are only means to an end—the end being to lay more firm hold on Christ. So Church worship, festivals and fasts are not religion, but a means to make us religious. If they fail in this the fault is ours. We are not *holding fast the Head*.

POINT II.—What place has legitimate asceticism in the Church of Christ? It is not to cripple us, but in order that we may live our real life. The body is *good*, but the fall has left its mark on it, and we have to die to wrongful desires in order to live to God. To die to the flesh that we may live to the Spirit. The end, therefore, is not death, but *life*; life in Christ.

POINT III.—No rules had been laid down by the Christian Church when St. Paul wrote, and this Colossian asceticism was based on the theory that matter is bad which is a lie. It is our misuse of things which is bad, not the things themselves. Fasting is not an end, but a means to an end, in order that the body may be under the dominion of the Spirit.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve on more reality in your external acts of religion.

OCTOBER 14.

Risen with Christ.

READ COL. iii. TO v. 18.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Resurrection of Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to lead the risen life.

POINT I.—*Set your affection on things above.* The mind and heart must be lifted up above this world, if the Resurrection of Christ is to have its moral counterpart in our lives. In Baptism we died to sin, and rose again to righteousness: all this was potential, and the Christian life consists in carrying it out actually in a daily death and a daily resurrection.

POINT II.—*Mortify therefore your members.* The risen life comes home to us very practically in these straight words of the Apostle. We are not called out of the world, but all our faculties have to be mortified by the power of Christ. Affections and thoughts have to be kept in order, or we cannot live the risen life.

POINT III.—*Put on . . . kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.* We have to show the risen life also in our dealings with others. Meekness and longsuffering—these are not natural to our fallen nature. They have to be acquired by the power of the risen Christ. Pride is the enemy. We must ever be laying the foundations of our Christian life in humility.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—The Christian life is a Christ-like life.

OCTOBER 15.

Speech.

READ COL. iii. 18 AND iv.

Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord's words, *By thy words thou shalt be justified.*

PRELUDE II.—Pray to exercise the gift of speech aright.

POINT I.—*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*¹ The first step towards curbing the tongue is to keep a guard over our thoughts and hearts. There is so much thoughtless and random talk, which is not *with grace* or *seasoned with salt*. This is because we are so thoughtless and careless, and do not realize the responsibility of speech.

POINT II.—The great temptation is to talk too much about our neighbours. We are too critical, and constantly apt to be guilty of want of charity. If we talk about others, let us talk about their good points and not about their faults. But it is better not to discuss other people more than we can help.

POINT III.—What, then, about ordinary conversation and social intercourse? Any conversation which tends to make our neighbour happier for our visit is good—*with grace, seasoned with salt*. Christianity is the religion of real joy, and if we can bring gladness into the lives of others by our conversation, let us do so.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be more careful in self-examination in regard to your *words*.

¹ St. Matt. xii. 34.

OCTOBER 16.

The Work of Life.

READ 1 THESS. i.

Your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul penning his first extant Epistle.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for strength to do in life all that God intends you to do.

POINT I.—*Your work of faith.* All the work which God gives us must be done in faith. We are to work not for time, but for eternity; we are to look not on the seen, but on the unseen; we are to walk not by sight, but by faith. What we *believe in* now, we shall *see* hereafter. How often our horizon is limited by this world or by the opinion of others!

POINT II.—*Labour of love.* If the atmosphere of work is faith, its true motive is love. Work is often labour (*i.e.* toil), but if we consecrate it, it becomes a labour or toil of love. The man who toils for his wife and family heeds not the suffering. The motive of *all* Christian work is the love of God and of man for God's sake.

POINT III.—*Patience of hope.* The end of hope is fruition, enjoyment. For what do we hope? For God. *We wait for His Son from heaven.* To enjoy God for ever is the end of our life here! But we need great patience. How often we are tempted to hurry God!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Re-dedicate your work to God on a basis of Faith, in an atmosphere of Love, with an outlook of Hope.

OCTOBER 17.

Disinterestedness.

READ 1 THESS. ii.

Because we would not be chargeable unto any of you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul working at his trade in the midst of his evangelizing work.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for unworldliness.

POINT I.—*Not as pleasing men, but God, Which trieth our hearts.* The sin of worldliness often shows itself in a feverish desire to please men! Love of popularity is a great snare. We think of what others are thinking of us! All this is contrary to Christian simplicity. Our aim should be to be kind to others in order to please God.

POINT II.—*But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.* If we are disinterested, this does not mean that we are to be indifferent to the feelings and prejudices of others. By no means; we must deal gently with the most perverse and difficult people if we would imitate St. Paul. He was ready to lay down his life for those to whom he ministered!

POINT III.—*As a father doth his children.* To the gentleness of a nurse St. Paul adds the anxiety of a father for the welfare of his children. He speaks of *exhorting, comforting, charging.* His disinterestedness did not lead him to be indifferent. The ideal he sets before us is of gentle, painstaking, persevering labour for others!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Seek, in all you do, the approval of God.

OCTOBER 18.

Human Sympathy.

READ 1 THESS. iii.

Praying exceedingly that we might see your face.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul at Corinth praying for his converts in Thessalonica.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of detachment.

POINT I.—This chapter shows us plainly that the longing for human sympathy and joy in social intercourse are legitimate for a Christian, and St. Paul speaks of his longing for and joy in his converts. Do you try to consecrate your hours of intercourse with others so that they may be times of real blessing to you and your friends?

POINT II.—*That no man should be moved by these afflictions.* This language shows that there was nothing weak in St. Paul's sympathy. He would have his converts brace themselves with the thought that to be a Christian is to bear a cross. The longing for human sympathy may degenerate into softness and enervating weakness. How is it with you?

POINT III.—*Unblameable in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Here is the one end to be aimed at in all our dealings one with another. We are to look forward to the Second Advent of Christ, and strive to become *unblameable in holiness*. Do we get better as life goes on and as the coming of Christ draws nearer?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make better use of your hours of social intercourse.

OCTOBER 19.

Purity.

READ 1 THESS. iv.

This is the will of God, even your sanctification.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord's beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

PRELUDE II.—Pray for this grace.

POINT I.—*This is the will of God, even your sanctification.* We should set the highest ideal before us in this matter, and believe that it is, by the grace of God, attainable. Entire sanctification of thought, word, and action is to be our aim, as it is certainly God's Will for us. Life is a continued struggle towards the attainment of this ideal.

POINT II.—*To possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*, i.e. to acquire his body, to get control over it, to rescue it from what is wrong, to consecrate it to right uses and to holiness. The pure man is free, having his body and passions under control ; the impure man is a slave to his lusts. We are to aim at acquiring this holy freedom.

POINT III.—*That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in this matter*, i.e. of impurity. St. Paul hints at the sin of adultery. He then returns to God's intention for us. *God hath called us . . . unto holiness.* Respond to this call. Examine your thoughts, use of your eyes, your conversation, your acts. Amend what is wrong.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve on greater care and strictness in this matter.

OCTOBER 20.

The Day of the Lord.

READ 1 THESS. V.

The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the unexpectedness of our Lord's Second Coming.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be ready for His appearing.

POINT I.—*As a thief in the night.* It is our Lord Himself Who has sanctioned this bold comparison.¹ The Thessalonians had been taught this by St. Paul, for he says, *Ye yourselves know perfectly.* When we least expect Him our Lord will come. How often should we ask ourselves, “Am I ready?” “Is there anything I ought to do before He comes?”

POINT II.—The thought of His Advent is a motive for work. *The night cometh, when no man can work.*² We are to *watch and be sober*, to do our business trustfully and quietly, looking for His approval, and not giving way to indolence or slackness. How much time we waste in mere indolent dreaming!

POINT III.—The thought is also a motive for prayer. So the Apostle says in this chapter, *Pray without ceasing.* Fussy, prayerless work is not what our Lord wants. All work needs the consecration of prayer. Does your work become an excuse for prayerlessness? Reflect that prayer implies quiet, sustained effort. Prayer is waiting upon God and waiting for Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn to look forward to and long for the Day of the Lord.

¹ St. Luke xii. 39; St. Matt. xxiv. 43.

² St. John ix. 4.

OCTOBER 21.

Endurance.

READ 2 THESS. i.

Your patience and faith in all your persecutions.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the need of endurance in the Christian life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to persevere unto the end.

POINT I.—St. Paul commends the Thessalonians for their faith—that *your faith groweth exceedingly*. There is special need nowadays for faith in the Unseen. The tendency now is very much towards materialism, which cannot help us in the strain and stress of life. “God alone remains,” wrote St. Theresa in her Breviary. It is well to remember this amid the many distractions of life.

POINT II.—After faith comes patience. In patience lies the real secret of endurance. “Patience alone weareth out all things,” wrote St. Theresa. Faith keeps the eye of the soul fixed on God, while patience bids us not try to hurry Him or to faint under His correction. Is the virtue of patience growing in you?

POINT III.—Then St. Paul thanks God for their charity. *The charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.* Their trials and persecutions had not made the Thessalonians *hard*. There is a danger lest we should become unsympathetic or cynical, which is terrible. Have always a “heart of flesh” towards your neighbour, a “heart of fire” towards God, and (if need be) a “heart of steel” towards yourself.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve, by God’s grace, to endure.

OCTOBER 22.

Antichrist.

READ 2 THESS. ii.

That man of sin . . . the son of perdition.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the incessant struggle of evil against good.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to hate sin.

POINT I.—Evil is evermore fighting against God. “Jesus is hidden in faithful hearts, Antichrist in sinful ones.” The danger is lest we should be harbouring half unconsciously some secret sin, or lest we should allow ourselves in some practice which conscience condemns. Are you learning to hate sin more as life goes on? *Ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil.*¹

POINT II.—*And now ye know what withholdeth.* What was it which was keeping in check the full development of evil? St. Paul may have been thinking of Roman law. Anyhow, now, it is plain that good laws and customs do much to repress, at all events, the outward manifestations of evil. But below the surface of things, what a seething mass of evil!

POINT III.—At the end—at the Great Day—there is to be an awful revelation of evil as well as the final triumph of good. Which of us will not need to pray for mercy in that Day? Think how attractively sin is dressed up now in books; but *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.*²

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember that life is a constant warfare.

¹ Ps. xcvi. 10.

² Isa. v. 20.

Work.

READ 2 THESS. iii.

For . . . this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord coming among us as a working man.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to labour faithfully at the work you have to do.

POINT I.—Labour is the law of life. Man is born to work, and this law of work is independent of the Fall. Adam and Eve were put into the garden “to dress it and to keep it.” Thus the law of work is indicated. The Fall brought toil and pain into work ; but we must all work, whether with hands or brains or both.

POINT II.—There were some going about saying that the Day of the Lord was so near that it was no use working ; others were “busybodies”—St. Paul rebukes such as these. Every true life is a working life. Suffering is sometimes our work here ; and all real prayer is work. We are to go on, and not be *weary in well-doing*.

POINT III.—In heaven we do not look forward to an eternity of idleness, but to a deathless life of service. We shall, in God’s mercy, rest ; but rest is not idleness, for *they rest not day and night*. What a blessed prospect of work without toil—rest without idleness ! Life needs steady courage to enable us to go on quietly with our work.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Consecrate afresh your life and its work to God.

OCTOBER 24.

The Saviour of Sinners.

READ 1 TIM. i. TO V. 18.

This is a faithful saying, . . . that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul looking back on his own past life.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a deeper sense of sin.

POINT I.—*Of whom I am chief.* In St. Paul's eyes he is himself the chiefest of sinners. He looks back on his past and thinks what he had been—*a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious*; and then he thinks of God's mercy in forgiving him, *in counting him faithful, in putting him into the ministry.* Look back on your life; renew your hatred of sin; ponder on the mercy of God.

POINT II.—St. Paul did wrong *ignorantly in unbelief.* Few of us have this excuse! Often we have sinned against full light: yet how lightly do men think of sin! The pardon of sin necessitated the death of Jesus Christ; so Scripture reveals, and it is to the Cross of Christ that we must cling. In it is our only hope in life or in death.

POINT III.—*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering.* If He has been so long-suffering to us, how shall we not bear with others! If we are hard on others, how can we expect mercy from God? The Epistles to Timothy alone speak of *mercy* (as well as grace and peace) in the opening salutation.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember to show *mercy.* God deals with us as we have dealt with others.

Intercession.

READ 1 TIM. i. 18 AND ii.

I exhort . . . that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

PRELUDE I.—St. Paul puts the duty of prayer *first of all*.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to regard prayer as the most important work of the day.

POINT I.—“Supplications”—denoting our insufficiency ; “prayers”—denoting devotion ; “intercession”—denoting urgency ;—all these culminate in “Eucharists,” *i.e.* the pleading of the Eucharistic Sacrifice before God. Other forms, private and public, are not to be put aside ; far from it. Yet they all lead up to prayer in Union with the Great Memorial of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

POINT II.—*For all men ; for kings, etc.* Reflect upon the wide scope of intercession here indicated. It is not enough merely to pray for our relations and friends. We should seek to enlarge the horizon of our prayers, and specially to think of those in authority and in responsible positions. How often we take it for granted that such persons do not need our prayers !

POINT III.—*Who will have all men to be saved.* This is God’s purpose for man. It is absolutely universal in its intention. Alas for the rebellious wills of men ! But are you in your sheltered home praying for those in the strain and stress of life ? Think of the length of time the saints have given to intercession. Remember we have a duty to “all men.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make a fresh beginning with prayers and intercessions.

OCTOBER 26.

The Sins of the Clergy.

READ 1 TIM. iii.

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

PRELUDE I.—Think how high a calling is the sacred ministry.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your life may never be a stumbling-block to others.

POINT I.—*A bishop must be blameless.* One reason why we so often fail is that we are not *vigilant*. We forget that we are “in an enemy’s country”; we forget that the greater professions we make the more we are the marks for Satan’s arrows. Above all, we need *vigilance*, lest having preached to others, we should ourselves be castaways.

POINT II.—Another reason for failure is want of true self-knowledge. The qualifications mentioned in this chapter seem so homely—*not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre*. Yet how often we are self-indulgent, impatient, covetous! There is need of diligent self-examination in regard to the *tendency* of our lives.

POINT III.—“The sins of teachers are the teachers of sin.” Things may be lawful for us (*i.e.* not wrong in the abstract) which may, nevertheless, be very inexpedient and which do not “edify.” We have to consider not merely whether a thing is right or wrong in the abstract, but whether it will help or hinder our ministry. “Priests who fall drag others down with them, as Satan did.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be more real and thorough in your self-examination.

OCTOBER 27.

The Clerical Life.

READ 1 TIM. iv.

Take heed unto thyself.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the peril of being active on behalf of others while neglecting one's own soul.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for greater watchfulness.

POINT I.—The danger of neglecting one's own soul is a very great one for clergy and all Church workers; the demands on our time and energies are so great, that we are tempted to shorten or omit our prayers and meditations. There cannot be a greater mistake than this. *They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*¹

POINT II.—*This is a faithful saying.* It was, that is, a common saying on which Christians loved to dwell, that *godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Godliness is the only thing which makes us really happy in this life as well as in the next. All other happiness is spurious. Wherein do you seek for it?

POINT III.—*Be thou an example.* The clergy (and those most nearly associated with them) are like a city set on an hill. Excellence of any kind demands to a certain extent isolation. The tallest tree in so far as it is the tallest is alone. It is the same in everything. We must not, then, shrink from our share of this burden if we would be patterns to others.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve before all outward activities to *take heed to thyself.*

¹ Cant. i. 6.

OCTOBER 28.

The Administration of Discipline.

READ 1 TIM. V.

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the family as the pattern of our duty in dealing with others.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for sympathy and tact with all who are round about you.

POINT I.—God has appointed the family as the type to be followed in the matter of discipline. All authority is or ought to be parental. The younger are to be treated like brothers and sisters, older people as we should treat our parents. How much smoother things would have been if we had always acted in this way !

POINT II.—*Without preferring one before another*, i.e. without prejudice. St. Paul warns Timothy first against prejudice, then against partiality. Prejudice comes from want of sympathy with characters which have no affinity to our own. There is need of great watchfulness lest we do others an injustice by not considering differences of natural temperament.

POINT III.—The other danger is partiality. This arises from want of self-control when characters attract and interest us. There is great need to discipline the affections, and for some persons this is the hardest kind of self-discipline. Check the *beginnings* of excessive affection. We have power then, much less power when we have once allowed ourselves to be fascinated.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Love of God and of others in God is our safeguard.

OCTOBER 29.

Covetousness.

READ 1 TIM. vi.

The love of money is the root of all evil.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the eager desire to be rich, which is characteristic of our day.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to lay hold on the true riches above.

POINT I.—St. Paul does not say money, but *the love of money*, is a root of every kind of evil. Covetousness is the unregulated desire for temporal goods. We see examples of the sin all round about us; but we can detect at least the possibility of it in our own hearts. We must be learning *detachment* from earthly things; otherwise, as life advances, the sin of covetousness is sure to take hold of us.

POINT II.—Our Lord always speaks of riches as dangerous. *How hardly*, etc. We have to learn the lesson of contentment. Make God and His Holy Will the object of your ambition, and that will give a legitimate and proper scope for that forward-reaching, upward-looking tendency in you which is God's gift to man. "Make the best of yourself" for the glory of God. God must be the centre.

POINT III.—*But thou, O man of God, flee these things.* The duty of avoiding covetousness is specially incumbent on a "man of God." *Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness*—these are the things to *follow after*, for they are in a true sense riches, and will not corrupt or canker. They are the objects of a right ambition.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be contented; to rest quietly on God's Will.

OCTOBER 30.

The Ordination Gift.

READ 2 TIM. i.

Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

PRELUDE I.—Consider St. Paul exhorting Timothy in this way.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may stir up the gift of the Holy Ghost given you in Confirmation (and Ordination).

POINT I.—The gift in Orders or in Confirmation lies dormant till we *stir it up* by the co-operation of our hearts and wills with God's intention and purpose. God's gifts will not act upon us mechanically; He waits evermore for the responsive wills of His own creatures, respecting in us our personality which makes us men, and not things.

POINT II.—The gift of Ordination is a gift of the spirit of *power and love and soberness*. It is a gift of power enabling us to discharge the duties of our office, and of power as opposed to cowardice and weakness. We are to be *mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds*¹ of Satan in the souls to whom we minister.

POINT III.—It is also the spirit of love and soberness. We can do nothing without love, but this love is no mere natural impulse of affection, but is a Divine virtue carrying with it self-control and wisdom. What confidence this thought of the gift of Ordination should give us as we go about our work—confidence in God!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve not to act upon impulse, but in the power of the Spirit.

¹ See 2 Cor. x. 4.

OCTOBER 31.

Soldiers, Wrestlers, Labourers.

READ 2 TIM. ii.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul's perseverance amidst hardships of all kinds.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to shun unnecessary ease and self-indulgence.

POINT I.—He uses three figures. First, that of a soldier. *Endure hardness.* The soldier is at the beck and call of his commanding officer ; he has to put up with long marches and scanty fare. So the progress of the Church is evermore through warfare, and it is the same with the work of the clergy. There is real fighting to be done ; and we have to guard against ease and self-indulgence.

POINT II.—*If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* The wrestler or athlete has to abstain from many things which others enjoy ; he must observe the rules of training as well as of wrestling. So with the Christian, and especially the Christian minister. It cannot be right to live an easy-going life in a world where His Master was crucified.

POINT III.—*The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.* The labourer who really works is the one who enjoys first the fruits of the earth. The life of the ministry is a life of work, and when you allow yourself a holiday or recreation, see to it that your object is to be able to work better afterwards.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Warfare, self-discipline, work.

NOVEMBER 1.

The Cloud of Witnesses.

READ HEB. xii. TO v. 7.

Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

PRELUDE I.—Picture a foot-race with a vast crowd looking on.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for perseverance in your Christian calling.

POINT I.—We have a race to run ; but we are not alone. Saints and angels look on. Eternal happiness depends on our winning. What is it that most hinders you? Is it love of money or ease? Is it sloth or sensuality? Are you putting aside occasions of sin? We have to run with patience, and patience begets perseverance.

POINT II.—*Looking unto Jesus, the Author [the Captain] and Perfecter of our faith.* In front of us is Jesus, the King of saints. He has been along this way. “He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain.”¹ There is no other way of winning save by the way of the Cross. These are they which have come out of great tribulation. Take the Cross to your heart.

POINT III.—*For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,* etc. It is so hard to remember that suffering and chastisement are signs of God’s love. It is a great thing to remember that everything that happens to us has been inspired or allowed by God. It is thus we learn resignation, and we cease to complain. The saints have gone further than this. They have said, “Either let me suffer or die.”²

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Courage to take up the Cross.

¹ Prayer-book, The Visitation of the Sick.

² St. Theresa.

NOVEMBER 2.

Perilous Times.

READ 2 TIM. iii.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the present day as a perilous time for Christians.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be watchful against the seductions of the modern world.

POINT I.—*Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.* Here surely is a sign that we are nowadays in a *perilous time*. The idolatry of pleasure is rampant all round about us! *Covetous, proud, unthankful.* Look into your heart. How we need to strive after gratitude to God, humility, contentedness, and, above all, an expulsive love of God which will drive out of our hearts all that is not Himself!

POINT II.—St. Paul points to two antidotes to this deplorable state of things. First, Timothy was to remember the Apostle's *doctrine and manner of life*: his firm *purpose*, his unfailing *faith*, his *long-suffering, charity, and patience*. It is by thinking of the example of teachers whom we revere that we are helped in our own life and work.

POINT III.—The second antidote is the Holy Scriptures, which are able to *make us wise unto salvation*. St. Paul was thinking only of the Old Testament. How great is our responsibility who have so much more! Do you study Scripture, try to live and act from its point of view? It is really God's message to man, in which message He reveals Himself and His love towards us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Realize that we live in perilous times. Be diligent in meditation on Scripture.

NOVEMBER 3.

The End of Life.

READ 2 TIM. iv.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. Paul dictating his last Epistle—on the threshold of martyrdom.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may hold on bravely to the end.

POINT I.—*I have fought a good fight.* Christian life, then, is a battle. We have foes to fight in ourselves and round about us. The three foes (according to our Baptismal vow) are the world, the flesh, and the devil. There is always need of fighting. We fight the world by looking up to God; the flesh by flight and mortification; and the devil by humility. How is it with you?

POINT II.—*I have finished my course.* The journey was almost done: he was now *ready to be offered* (or *poured out* in sacrificial libation), and he is on the verge of his *departure* home. We too are travellers towards Home: our life is to be lived not for ourselves, but “*poured out*” for God and our neighbours. Are you getting more ready for Home?

POINT III.—*I have kept the faith.* The faith is like a treasure we must guard. The faith that the Eternal Son has come into our world, and has gathered us into His Holy Family by the power of the Holy Ghost, so that we may live in the fellowship of His life and sufferings. Are we guarding this? Are we looking forward with joy to His appearing? Can we hope for a crown?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Self-humiliation: desire to make full use of your opportunities.

NOVEMBER 4.

A Servant of God.

READ TITUS i.

Paul, a servant of God.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the clergy as in a special sense the servants of God.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be wholly devoted to the service of God.

POINT I.—*Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.* Observe that he is a servant before he is an Apostle. Apostleship springs from his servitude. We cannot be messengers of Christ unless we are first the servants of God. “Bond-servant” the word really is. God’s service, remember, is perfect freedom.¹ *Cui servire regnare est.*

POINT II.—*In hope of eternal life.* This is the atmosphere in which he dwells, and in which he exercises his ministry. *In hope of eternal life.* Here we have no continuing city. We cannot find any lasting satisfaction in anything which this world has to give. The end of hope is fruition, and fruition will be hereafter.

POINT III.—*God . . . hath in due times manifested His Word through preaching.* It is God’s method, and He knows best, that men and not angels shall be His messengers to other men. What a dignity this gives to all preaching—to remember that it is a message from God! How about your preaching or your listening to sermons?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Aspire to serve God more faithfully.

¹ Mattins, The Second Collect.

NOVEMBER 5.

The Second Advent.

READ TITUS ii.

Looking for . . . the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.¹

PRELUDE I.—The early Christians looked forward with eager expectation to the Second Advent.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may bring this great truth to bear upon your own life.

POINT I.—The attitude of Christians should be an attitude of expectation. They are as men *who wait for their Lord*. He Himself has told us that He will come like a thief,² *i.e.* suddenly, unexpectedly. What a motive this thought should be to watchfulness, diligence, purity, and single-hearted service ! Oh that we may be found watching !

POINT II.—*Our great God and Saviour.* He Who is our God is also our Saviour. Who else could save us except God ? No angel could save us. Only He Who created us could redeem and re-create us. He saves us by taking us up into His own life as members of His Body by the power of the Holy Ghost.

POINT III.—*Who gave Himself for us.* Here was the uttermost outpouring of Divine love ! The Eternal Son, by an act of infinite condescension and self-sacrificing love, redeemed us by His Blood, and now purifies us by letting us share His life, that we may be a *people for His own possession* through the power of the Holy Ghost. How immeasurably high is our vocation !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—See that you are *zealous in good works*, waiting for Christ.

¹ This is the most accurate translation.

² Rev. xvi. 15.

NOVEMBER 6.

The Kindness of God.

READ TITUS iii.

The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man.

PRELUDE I.—Think of your own Baptism, by which you were born into the Family of the Redeemed.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to rise up to your calling as a child of God.

POINT I.—Our salvation is the work of God's "kindness" to us. The love of God is the moving cause of our Redemption. Through love the Father sent the Son; through love the Son died for us; through love the Holy Ghost dwells within us. So sin is forgiven, and our fallen nature re-created in Christ. This amazing work was the result of God's "kindness" to man!

POINT II.—*Not by works of righteousness which we have done.* We cannot earn our salvation. Far from it! Human nature could do nothing to raise itself. The civilizations of the ancient world left the world as morally rotten as they found it. It is the same with our boasted modern civilization as a principle divorced from Christ. Without Him the world will sink back into corruption.

POINT III.—*By the washing of regeneration, etc.* By the font. By Baptism we are brought into the new life of the Second Adam by the power of the Holy Ghost. Called to antagonism to the world which we have to "overcome" in the strength of Jesus Christ, we are saved by being faithful to the principle of this new life.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be truer to your Baptismal regeneration.

NOVEMBER 7.

Courtesy.

READ PHILEMON.

Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Paul writing to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray always to be gentle and courteous.

POINT I.—This Epistle gives us a wonderful insight into the way in which Christianity met the social evils of the day. The runaway slave had come across St. Paul, who had converted him. The Apostle from his prison in Rome sends him back with this letter to Philemon, asking him to receive him back *now as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved.* So Christianity undermined slavery by the inherent force of its own loving-kindness.

POINT II.—Further it is an illustration of the gentle way in which St. Paul dealt with his converts. He might have enjoined Philemon to do this, but *being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ, he besought him.* What an example to us to be gentle and considerate towards those over whom we might be supposed to have some claim !

POINT III.—*Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.* He is sure of his friendship ; he can trust him. It is far better to trust people. They respond to such an appeal as this. But mark how St. Paul prayed for him. *Making mention of thee always in my prayers.* Do you pray enough for your friends ? Friendship is a great responsibility. Prayer and unswerving gentleness cement it.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Never be hurried or worried into harshness.

NOVEMBER 8.

Christ the Final Revelation.

READ HEB. i.

God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your thoughts may be more and more drawn up to Heaven.

POINT I.—God had been gradually unveiling Himself to man; He had spoken, in many ways and by fragmentary portions, to His people by the prophets and throughout the Scriptures. Very gradually as the centuries passed, He had been making His real character known to men throughout their history as they were able to bear it. Gradually the light had been let in upon them.

POINT II.—But now, in these last days, One has come and spoken Who is more than a prophet; He is a Son, even the very radiance of His Father's glory and the perfect manifestation of what God is in Himself. He is One to Whom belongs the very Substance or Being of God, Who is bearing the Universe along by the creative utterance of His Word or power.

POINT III.—The Incarnate Christ is God's last word to man. Far above the angels, being Himself God the Son. He made cleansing for our sins by His Death, and then sat down on the Right Hand of the Majesty of God. If we would conquer this world as He conquered it, we must look up to God more and more, and listen to the words and watch the Example of the Incarnate Son.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember that the words of Christ are the words of God Himself.

NOVEMBER 9.

What is Man?

READ HEB. ii. TO iii. 7.

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Jesus at the Right Hand of God.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be obedient to His calling and inspirations.

POINT I.—Jesus Incarnate is higher than the angels. The Jews believed that the nations of the world were committed to angels, but the writer of this Epistle says that now, since Christ came, not to angels, but to man, God hath subjected the inhabited world. In a lower sense, indeed, this is true of fallen man, that he was to have dominion over the fish of the sea and the beasts of the earth: fallen man is God's vicegerent on earth.¹

POINT II.—But these words are true of the Incarnate Christ in a much higher sense. In Him, we see One in Whom our manhood is crowned with glory and honour. He took our nature of the Virgin Mother (thus making Himself lower than the angels), but after He had *tasted death for all men*, He is crowned at His Ascension. Meditate on the victory of Christ and the destiny of man.

POINT III.—By His death in our nature, He has brought to nought him who since the Fall had held power over man—the devil. Being the sinless One, He could not be held captive by death; but rather by His death He has taken the sting out of death. Thus He “took hold of” our nature in the womb of Mary, and redeemed it from the power of death.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—He Who has passed through suffering, temptation, and death will help us in the same trials.

¹ See Ps. viii.

NOVEMBER 10.

The Rest that remaineth.

READ HEB. iii. 7 to iv. 14.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the promise set before us of entering into God's rest.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may not harden your heart in disobedience.

POINT I.—Do we believe in the promises of God in Jesus Christ? There are warnings enough if we look back on history. The history of the Exodus, what is it but one long record of murmurings against and provocations of God? So the Jews of old, through unbelief, were not allowed to enter into that rest, the good land which God purposed to give them. The warning to us is—*Harden not your hearts.*

POINT II.—We have a rest to look forward to, of which the Psalm speaks. It is the rest of God Himself. The danger in these latter days is lest we should disbelieve the promises of God. We must *labour to enter in*. Christian life demands real effort, steady and continued effort, a real taking up of the Cross.

POINT III.—*The Word of God is quick (i.e. living) and powerful.* The Word which is preached to you pierces down into the depths of the soul, laying bare motives and intentions; and indeed everything is laid bare, stripped and naked before God—before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. He is a God “unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid.”¹

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Examine your motives; pray for reality.

¹ Collect for Purity.

NOVEMBER 11.

The Sympathy of Christ.

READ HEB. iv. 15 AND V.

But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord as the great High Priest.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for His help against temptation.

POINT I.—*A great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens.* Christ's priestly work of intercession goes on in heaven. *He ever liveth to make intercession for us.* In this work He combines infinite knowledge of us and infinite compassion for us. Our temptations to worldliness, sloth, sensuality . . . all are known to Him. What hope this should give us in our approach to God!

POINT II.—*Let us hold fast our profession* (or our confession, *i.e.* the confession of our faith). Without this faith where should we be in our temptations? What assurance should we have that God is not mocking us? The perfect Man has appeared, tempted as we are, Who is, nevertheless, sinless and our Mediator with God, being Himself one with the Father. We are caught up into His intercession.

POINT III.—*Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace* with a double object in view—to find *mercy* for the past, and *grace* for the present and future. Self-abasement at the thought of our sins merges into confidence from the thought of God's mercy in Christ. Courage in the midst of discouraging experience is what we need.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for an increase of faith in the compassion of Jesus Christ.

NOVEMBER 12.

Final Impenitence.

READ HEB. vi.

Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the pleadings of God the Holy Ghost with the souls of men.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may deepen in your penitence for past sin.

POINT I.—*It is impossible for those who were once enlightened*, etc. God does not act arbitrarily. The words do not mean that the door is finally closed in this life to any one who earnestly repents and seeks forgiveness. But there is a state of wilful continuance in sin, resisting all the pleadings of God's Spirit. It is a state or condition of conscious resistance to God's will.

POINT II.—*Who were once enlightened*, i.e. baptized. Baptism puts us into an entirely fresh relation to God. We become His children because we share the life of His Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. The "gift of God" is the gift of this new life. Do we think enough of the seriousness of post-Baptismal deadly sin?

POINT III.—*The earth which drinketh in the rain*, etc. As the earth is responsive to God's gifts, so must we be to His supernatural gifts of grace. Yet there is a malign power in the human will which makes it possible for one on whom all God's good gifts have been showered to fall away from Him. Think on what God has done for you.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—*Be not high-minded, but fear.*

NOVEMBER 13.

A Priest after the Order of Melchisedec.

READ HEB. vii.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.

PRELUDE I.—Consider Melchisedec as a type of Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of Jesus as our Redeemer and Advocate.

POINT I.—Christ's priesthood is superior to that of Aaron's because it is *after the order of Melchisedec*. Now, Melchisedec was one who blessed Abraham (the forefather of Levi), and received tithes of that patriarch. The mysteriousness of Melchisedec's appearance as *priest of the most High God*, and his offering of bread and wine, are wonderful figures of Christ and the Holy Eucharist.

POINT II.—The priesthood of Aaron is set aside by our Lord, for His priesthood is *after the order of Melchisedec*. He comes from the tribe of Judah, and not from the priestly tribe of Levi. He hath an *unchangeable* priesthood. It cannot be passed on to or invaded by another. It is inherent in His office as Mediator between God and man, and there is no other mediator.

POINT III.—This sacrifice can never be repeated like the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. He offered Himself up once for all upon the Cross, and there is no other sacrifice for sin. It is perfect and all-sufficient. We must take refuge in His sacred wounds, identifying ourselves with Him; sharing His life, we may plead His merits, for He is not outside us, but within us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me.”

NOVEMBER 14.

The Minister of the True Tabernacle.

READ HEB. viii.

A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the high priest entering the Holy of Holies.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the habit of close communion with God.

POINT I.—The Tabernacle was meant to represent the Presence of God with men. It was called the Tent or Dwelling-place, because the glory of God was there concealed in the Holy Place. It is even called “the Dwelling-place of Jehovah.” Jesus Christ dwells now among His people. He is with us and within us in the closest possible alliance and communion, for we are *members of His Body*.

POINT II.—The Tabernacle also represented God’s “conversableness” with man. It was called “the Tent of meeting,” because there God met and talked with men. He made Himself known there to His people. Jesus Christ completely revealed God. He has made God known to men. *He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*

POINT III.—The Tabernacle was also called “the Tent of witness.” The “witness” was the revelation of the character of God contained in the Ten Commandments. The Tabernacle therefore witnessed to the *holiness of God*. Hence it was called “the Sanctuary.” Jesus Christ revealed completely the holiness of God. This implies that God requires holiness in men. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Our Lord’s Acts and Words reveal the Will and Mind of God.

NOVEMBER 15.

The Blood of Christ.

READ HEB. ix.

How much more shall the Blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience?

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Christ upon the Cross.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more and more perfect cleansing by the application of His Blood.

POINT I.—*For if the blood of bulls and of goats . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.* The old sacrifices could do something ; they could not touch the conscience, but they could restore a man to civil and ecclesiastical rights ; they could and did deal with his external relation to God and his neighbour ; they were not inoperative. *They sanctified to the purifying of the flesh*, and so pointed on to something better.

POINT II.—*How much more shall the Blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience?* The contrast is not between the blood of animals and the blood of a mere man, but between the blood of animals and the Blood of God made man. The contrast is, therefore, between the finite and the Infinite! Who could venture to say beforehand what the “Blood of God” could effect ? Can there be any limit ?

POINT III.—The “Blood of God” cleanses the conscience. It sanctifies the inner man, giving him pardon for the past and new strength for the future. It cleanses us from the *guilt* and also from the *power* of sin, if we will but co-operate with its sanctifying power.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember that you have been redeemed and sanctified by the Blood of Christ.

NOVEMBER 16.

The Obedience of Christ.

READ HEB. X. TO V. 18.

Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord saying, “I came not to do My own Will, but the Will of Him that sent Me.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a spirit of willing obedience.

POINT I.—It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. It is not possible that the blood of any *creature* should take away sins. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were designed (1) to keep in mind the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God ; and (2) to point to the Coming of some Person Whose sacrifice should be able to take away sin.

POINT II.—Jesus Christ came, and the Apostolic writer here insists, by quotations from Psalm xl., that the essence of Christ’s sacrifice lay in His obedience. *A body hast Thou prepared Me*, or (as in the Hebrew of the Psalm) *Mine ears hast Thou opened*, both imply that what God looked for and accepted was Christ’s life of perfect obedience consummated in death.

POINT III.—His obedience does not exempt us from obedience. It is far otherwise ; it is His obedience which makes our obedience acceptable. We are accepted *in Him*. It is *daily obedience* to God’s Will which we often find so hard. It is in trifles that our real trial consists. How earnestly should we long to be more exact and loving in our obedience !

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Thankfulness to Christ, resolution to be obedient.

NOVEMBER 17.

Access to God.

READ HEB. x. 19 TO END.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for childlike confidence in approaching God through Christ.

POINT I.—Jesus Christ has opened out the way for us to the Father. The veil is the veil of His Flesh, “by the rending of which in the Broken Body and Outpoured Blood He has opened a new and living way into the Presence of God.” So God has drawn us to Himself by the Death and Passion of Jesus Christ. God and man are made One in Him.

POINT II.—*Let us draw near.* Let us constantly draw near to God with a steadfast faith, certain of acceptance, since by penitence we have had our hearts sprinkled with the Atoning Blood, and the conscience is clear from its load of sin, and we have been washed in the regenerating waters of Baptism.

POINT III.—We must expect suffering and persecution, but let us hold fast the confession of our faith in Christ, His promises and His work—which confession we made at our Baptism; and let us stir one another up to a pious emulation in love and good works, for the day of the Lord is drawing nigh.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—School yourself to long exceedingly for the manifestation of Jesus Christ at the Great Day.

NOVEMBER 18.

Faith.

READ HEB. xi. TO v. 17.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, as examples of faith.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may “walk by faith, not by sight.”

POINT I.—Faith is the *substance* of (*i.e.* firm trust in) things hoped for, the *conviction* of things not seen. The true antithesis to faith is sight. Reason is not contrary to faith, rather faith is reason illuminated. We are not to rest in the seen, but in the unseen. What is seen passes away, the unseen remains.

POINT II.—One great sin of our age is materialism. This is the opposite of faith, for it is a resting in the seen. Men live for this world with no thought of another! They are wrapt up in the perishing phenomena round about them! Can anything be more opposed to the idea of faith in God?

POINT III.—We must, however, expect faith to be tested, put to the proof. The Old Testament examples show us the power of faith. What endurance it exhibited in Noah and Abraham! They were, through faith, strong enough to confess that *they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve never to regard this world as your home. We are on a journey, sojourners upon earth, wayfarers going towards their true country.

NOVEMBER 19.

The Power of Faith.

READ HEB. xi. 17 TO END.

Of whom the world was not worthy.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the world's estimate of the saints! Contrast God's estimate!

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may follow the blessed saints "in all virtuous and godly living."

POINT I.—*Wrought righteousness.* Faith must be operative, not merely passive. It is through the power of faith that we are enabled to face the difficulties of life. *Faith working by love* is the faith which justifies, and a true faith is known by its work and by its fruits. This is a rebuke to our indolence and want of effort. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Obtained promises.* Faith is nourished by prayer. To live in the power of the Unseen is impossible without constant prayer. So only will God and the invisible world be real to us. If we would increase our faith we must be more constant in prayer for ourselves and others.

POINT III.—*Out of weakness were made strong.* Another characteristic of true faith is that it is mistrustful of self. It does not under-estimate the power of the Evil One. It knows that the first step in the spiritual life is mistrust of self and trust in God. Is this a rebuke to your self-reliance? The power of faith is a power which comes from God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more regular and energetic in prayer and work.

NOVEMBER 20.

The Christian Athlete.

READ HEB. xii.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate a crowd watching a game or a race.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for grace to run your race faithfully to the end.

POINT I.—*Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.* Like athletes, we are to train down superfluous weight, and lay aside all unnecessary clothing likely to hinder our movements. It means the spirit and practice of *detachment* from luxuries and superfluous “comforts.” Am I exercising myself in detachment, or am I getting more dependent on the world?

POINT II.—*Let us run with patience.* To start well is not enough. We need endurance and perseverance. This does not come “naturally” to us, so we need to pray for steady endurance to the end. If the course sometimes seems long, remember that God knows best, and He is not trifling with us. *He that shall endure unto the end.*

POINT III.—*Looking unto Jesus.* Literally we are to look *away* from other things, and look *to* Jesus. Just as a runner keeps his eyes on the goal, so far as may be, as he runs, so we are to have one aim before us, viz. the aim of pleasing God, as Christ our Master *endured the Cross*. Single-minded dedication to His service day by day.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to practise detachment from all that may hinder you.

NOVEMBER 21.

Clergy and Laity.

READ HEB. xiii.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

PRELUDE I.—Think of a parish in which the pastor is deservedly loved and respected.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to think rightly of your duty to the clergy.

POINT I.—One of the first duties of the laity towards the clergy is to pray for them. *Pray for us*, as the writer of this Epistle says. There is too much criticism of the clergy, too little prayer for them. Think of your own prayers and your family prayers. Can you improve in this respect? Do you criticize the sermons or pray that they may do good to yourself and others?

POINT II.—Another duty is *obedience*. The ground on which this duty is here based is, *that they watch for your souls*. Follow their teaching; try and amend your life by making sermons more real to you. Expect to hear something to help you, to guide you, to comfort you. Go to church in a docile, and not in a critical, frame of mind.

POINT III.—The clergy are best helped when they see the laity expecting a high standard from them. Show that you do not respect worldliness or unkindness in a priest. Help the clergy to give themselves whole-heartedly to their sacred calling. Consult them on spiritual matters, and expect help from them in this way.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Bring your duty to the clergy in review from time to time under the Fifth Commandment.

Temptation.

READ ST. JAS. i.

Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

PRELUDE I.—Think of Job and his trials and temptations.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for patience amid trials.

POINT I.—The word “temptation” is used in two senses. First in the sense of “trial.” *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials.* God allows us to be tried, as He allowed Job to be tried, in order to test our faith and patience. Especially life needs patience. We are not to be “put out” by trials, but we are to perfect ourselves in patience and trustfulness.

POINT II.—The second meaning is that of “temptation.” God permits what He does not inspire. Thus He allowed Job to be tempted ; and David was “tempted” to number Israel. Thus we are allowed to be put to the proof. But temptation is not sin. There can be no sin without the consent of the will, when we are *drawn away by our own lust, and enticed.*

POINT III.—In thus allowing us to be “tempted” God is not trifling with us. It is He Who sends us *every good gift and every perfect gift.* God is good, and His purposes for men are evermore full of beneficence and goodness. Think more of God’s goodness towards you, and remember that, if you suffer trials and temptations, they are allowed to come upon you for your good by a good God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Courage under temptations and trials.

NOVEMBER 23.

Faith and Works.

READ ST. JAS. ii.

Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. James denouncing those who claimed to have faith but gave no evidence of it in their lives.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be more real in religion.

POINT I.—St. James is perhaps arguing against a caricature and perversion of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. There were apparently some who said, "Only believe, and it matters not what your conduct is." This is iniquitous. Faith is not faith unless, when opportunity occurs, it issues in act. *Faith, being alone, is dead.* It is, in fact, not faith at all, but a parody of it.

POINT II.—Both writers are arguing for the same thing, though in different terms. What both insist on is the need of moral movement. St. Paul inveighs against mere "works" of external conformity implying no moral life—*works of law.* St. James inveighs against a merely intellectual assent—"faith"—equally destitute of moral value.

POINT III.—Apply it. We are in need of caution against both dangers. Mere external conformity without self-surrender and moral adhesion to God is worthless. Mere intellectual assent having no bearing on the moral life is also morally worthless. Faith is an act of the whole moral being, or it is not faith at all.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Remember that justifying faith is "faith working by love."

NOVEMBER 24.

Sins of the Tongue.

READ ST. JAS. iii.

Bchold, how great a matter a liitle fire kindleth !

PRELUDE I.—Think of the ships turned by their small rudders.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to keep a guard over your tongue.

POINT I.—*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.* St. James means that if we are able to control our speech, this goes a long way to control our whole nature. Discipline of the tongue is sadly needed against detraction, exaggeration, unreality, impatience, and anger. What says conscience?

POINT II.—As a small spark kindles a great forest, so is the tongue a little member, but *boasting great things*. If you cannot control the rising of anger, you can be silent. But some men “discourse themselves into a passion.”¹ *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not in my tongue.*

POINT III.—Concerning detraction ; ask yourself before you mention anything to the discredit of another, not “May I say this ?” for then you will generally find some excuse for saying it, but “Must I say this ?” and you will very rarely find it necessary. Positively try and think of some good thing about one who is being abused.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be careful in your self-examination, in your *conversations*.

¹ Jeremy Taylor; “Holy Living.”

Humility.

READ ST. JAS. IV.

Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He shall lift you up.

PRELUDE I.—Think of pride lying at the root of nearly every sin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of humility.

POINT I.—Humility is the distinctive virtue of Christianity. What is it? It is a recognition of our own nothingness and vileness in the sight of God. *Submit yourselves therefore to God.* Humility makes God its centre, pride makes self its centre. Remember that humiliations are the road to humility. How do you bear humiliations?

POINT II.—*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* So pride is sometimes the reason of prolonged temptation, e.g. temptations of the flesh. Humility, then, must be sought for as the ground and root of all virtues. It is the soil out of which other virtues grow. It is the foundation on which other virtues are built up.

POINT III.—*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.* The danger is lest we should be unreal. But humility is indeed the “victory of truth” in the soul.¹ It comes from thinking of God, His power and goodness and holiness, and so recognizing our own terrible sinfulness. Humility is contempt of self. Pride is contempt of God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to pray every day for humility.

¹ Liddon.

NOVEMBER 26.

Patience.

READ ST. JAS. V.

Behold, we count them happy which endure.

PRELUDE I.—Reflect that self-control is a sign of greatness of character.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the grace of patience.

POINT I.—*The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* What is the horizon of your hopes and aspirations? To the early Christians it was the coming of Jesus Christ—His Second Coming in Glory. Reflect on this, and consider the light it throws on the fears and ambitions of life. How little it matters whether we are in high place or low, in prosperity or in trials, if only we are where God wills us to be!

POINT II.—*That the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* While we wait for our Lord's Second Coming we do well to think of the mercy and pitifulness of God. He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and is very tender in all His dealings with us. Meditate on God's kindness to you, and let your heart go out in love to Him.

POINT III.—*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.* This last clause seems unreal at first sight; but what does St. James mean? Turn your varying emotions to good account; keep your heart turned towards God. Give thanks to Him in joy; pray to Him in affliction. The eye of the soul should be like the needle of a compass—always pointing to and looking at God.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Set your heart and thoughts more and more on God.

NOVEMBER 27.

Joy.

READ 1 ST. PET. i. TO V. 22.

Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the Christian life as one of joy.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to illustrate this in your own case.

POINT I.—St. Peter begins this Epistle in triumphant tones—*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Which . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.* Christians are to rejoice as men *redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ.* We have a right to be light-hearted if we are living according to God's Will. There is sorrow enough in the world, and we must do what we can to spread around us an atmosphere of holy joy. What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Whom, having not seen, ye love.* Joy is ever the fruit of love. If we have love in our hearts we rejoice. If we have a holy love in our hearts it will show itself in holy joy. Our joyless lives are the result of loveless hearts. The joy of the saints was the result of their love of God in Christ.

POINT III.—*Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Faith must be deep-rooted in the soul if we are to rejoice like this. We are so bound by the things of sense that we cannot realize the things unseen. If we can increase in *faith and love*, we shall make our lives more full of joy. “Serve God and be cheerful.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to do what you can to spread joy and happiness round about you.

NOVEMBER 28.

Christ, the Corner-stone.

READ 1 ST. PET. i. 22 TO ii. 11.

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Church built up on Christ, Who is the Corner-stone.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to keep true to your high ideals.

POINT I.—The passages in the Psalms and in Isaiah are here put together.¹ The Corner-stone is the Messiah rejected by the Jews at large; but to them that believe, He is *precious*. Christians are the elect people, called into special nearness to God, and built up a spiritual temple, upon the Corner-stone Jesus Christ.

POINT II.—There is need of recalling this “separatedness” which should belong to Christians. We are not free to do as other men do. There is a Christian moral law which must keep us separate in some real sense from merely nominal Christians, who pay no regard to the law of God so long as they do not come into collision with the police.

POINT III.—*A royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession.* These terms, originally applied to Jews, St. Peter transfers to Christians. Look at your life, and see if you can rise up more to the ideal which this language suggests. The dignity and greatness of the Christian profession is a help in times of loneliness or of conflict. We are, each of us, one of God's elect.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Try to realize the meaning of the priesthood of all Christians.

¹ See Isa. xxviii. 16 and Ps. cxviii. 22.

NOVEMBER 29.

Considerateness.

READ 1 ST. PET. ii. 11 TO iii. 8.

Honour all men.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the courtesies of life on the outcome of the Christian Faith.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for gentleness and consideration to all.

POINT I.—*Honour all men.* There is always something to honour in every one we may meet—because men were made in the image of God, and that image is never wholly defaced. Do you realize this is the case of those whom you “naturally” dislike, or in those who repel you? If not, what is your religion doing for you?

POINT II.—Our trial is often concerned with those with whom we come in constant contact. Hence St. Peter's advice to servants, wives, husbands. We must expect to be tried in this way; watch the *beginnings* of irritation, and learn to control yourself at the very first rising of impatience. You can rebuke afterwards when you are wholly self-controlled.

POINT III.—Our probation often in life consists in *bearing* with the rudenesses or the slights of others. If we show great sensitiveness life becomes a burden, and we become fretful and worse than useless to others. “Expecting no notice, grateful for any,” is a good motto; for if we expect little we shall not run the risk of being disappointed if we get little.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—While showing all respect and consideration to others, crush all self-importance in yourself.

NOVEMBER 30.

St. Andrew.

READ ST. JOHN xii. 20-42.

Sir, we would see Jesus.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Greeks coming to Philip, and Andrew and Philip bringing them to Jesus.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may bring others to our Lord.

POINT I.—St. Andrew is set before us in the Gospels as the Apostle of influence—the one who brought others to Jesus. *He first findeth his own brother Simon. . . . And he brought him to Jesus.*¹ How about your influence in your own family? With your brothers or sisters, children or parents? Do you ever speak of religion with them? How strangely shy we often are, even towards those whom we love best, on the highest subjects! What says conscience?

POINT II.—*There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes.*² It is Andrew again who brings this “lad” to the notice of Jesus. How is it with regard to your influence on casual acquaintances? Think what Andrew was able to do. This lad was the means of feeding five thousand! We do not know how many we may bring to our Lord through influencing *one lad* for good!

POINT III.—*Sir, we would see Jesus.* These Greeks were the firstfruits of the Gentile world, and were brought to Jesus by Andrew (and Philip). Their request, *Sir, we would see Jesus*, is the cry of the heathen world—indeed, of the human heart wherever it beats, however unconscious it may be of its own want! What are you doing to respond to that cry—to satisfy that need?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to make more effort to bring others to our Lord.

¹ St. John i. 41.

² St. John vi. 9.

Suffering. (I.)

READ 1 ST. PET. iii. 8 TO iv. 7.

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord coming into the world to suffer and die for us.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be able to bear cheerfully all the suffering to which you may be called.

POINT I.—St. Peter speaks in this passage of suffering. He seems to expect to be persecuted for being a Christian. *It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.* We must cling, he says, to the testimony of a *good conscience*, so that our persecutors may be ashamed. How far do you shrink from suffering? How about moral cowardice? Are you ever untruthful to avoid the pain of humiliation?

POINT II.—*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust.* Christ has by His sufferings done for us what we could not do for ourselves. He has suffered *that He might bring us to God.* This thought should fill us with thankfulness. As we enter on the month in which we commemorate His Birth, remember that He came to *suffer for us.*

POINT III.—*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.* Christ's sufferings do not excuse us from suffering. Rather they have turned suffering into a kind of sacrament. We are not saved *from* the Cross; rather we are saved *on* the Cross. Every Christian must bear his Cross, and that means suffering. But suffering has been transfigured by Christ's Cross.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to suffer cheerfully all that God calls you to suffer.

DECEMBER 2.

Suffering. (II.)

READ 1 ST. PET. IV. 7 TO END.

Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Peter urging his converts to prepare for persecution.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more courage amid the sufferings and perplexities of life.

POINT I.—St. Peter still pursues the subject of impending persecution. They are not to count it a *strange thing*, but to *rejoice* as being *partakers of Christ's sufferings*. This is, indeed, a hard lesson to learn; it is nothing less than that love of the Cross which is a distinguishing mark of saints. How far are you learning to embrace your Cross *joyfully*?

POINT II.—*If any man suffer as a Christian, let him . . . glorify God on this behalf.* The Christian who suffers for being true to his principles is to rejoice, and, more than this, he is to *glorify God*. This is the temper of mind which pervaded the Early Church, as we find constantly in the Acts of the Apostles. What a rebuke to our grumbling temper! How far do the trials of life lead you to *glorify God*? Resist at least the temptation to find fault with God.

POINT III.—Those who suffer are bidden by St. Peter to *commit their souls to God in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* Restful, trustful confidence in God is what the Apostle enjoins. How often do we complain to our friends without even trying to rest in God! This childlike restfulness in God's Will will carry us through every trial with evenness and joy.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve amid trials to serve the Lord *with gladness*.

Humility.

READ 1 ST. PET. V.

Be clothed with humility.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord girding Himself with a towel and washing the disciples' feet.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may strive after true humility.

POINT I.—There is little doubt that when St. Peter wrote this passage he was thinking of our Lord's action in washing the disciples' feet. *Gird yourselves with humility.* He is thinking of the slave's garment as he waits on others. This is the pattern for Christians. Our lives must be lives of "service." Is your life one of "service" to others?—to your family, to your neighbourhood? Or is it selfish? Remember how the great Apostle St. Peter begins this Epistle.

POINT II.—*God resisteth the proud.* This is the law of God's dealings with us. To suppress the risings of self-assertion becomes a duty. There is to be no shrinking from tasks laid upon us, but a consciousness of our own unworthiness in the sight of God. To accept a vocation is one thing, to push ourselves in front of others is another. It is this kind of self-assertion that God *resists*.

POINT III.—*Being ensamples to the flock.* This applies especially to those placed in any position of authority. They are not to be *lords over God's heritage*, but to be examples. Influence is acquired more by what we do—by our life, by what we are—than by what we say. Our words have a force proportionate only to the eloquence of our lives.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for true humility of heart and reality.

DECEMBER 4.

Christian Progress.

READ 2 ST. PET. i.

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue.

PRELUDE I.—Think of the *exceeding great and precious promises* made by God to the elect.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be energetic in making your calling and election sure.

POINT I.—St. Peter is exhorting us to greater exertion in the Christian life. It is not enough to be called, we must rise up increasingly to respond to that call. Are we not apt to take it for granted that we shall persevere to the end, whereas perseverance is a gift without which it is certain that we shall fall back into self-satisfied indolence? What says conscience?

POINT II.—*Add to your faith virtue.* But virtue implies effort, and after virtue we add knowledge. There must be growth in spiritual apprehension, in the consciousness of the other world, in detachment and self-control. “Now I begin to be a ‘disciple,’ ” said St. Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom. Every day we must begin afresh to serve God better.

POINT III.—*Patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity!* Here are steps in the Christian’s course. There are no short cuts to holiness! We need patience and steady progress; God does not ask for increasing activity so much as for increasing and quiet self-consecration. Let us take pains about this during this Advent.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire for progress in sanctification.

Sin a Bondage.

READ 2 ST. PET. ii.

Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

PRELUDE I.—Consider that sin always brings its own punishment.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be delivered from your besetting sin.

POINT I.—*While they promise them liberty.* Here is the great false promise underlying all sin ; for sin is an attempt to be independent of God. It is trying to be free from the control of God. Lust or pride or anger are all examples of this ; but in reality sin is a bondage, and the only true freedom for man consists in his doing God's Will, “ Whose service is perfect freedom.”

POINT II.—*They themselves are the servants of corruption.* A man is a slave to the sin in which he specially indulges. This is seen conspicuously in such sins as lust or intemperance ; but it is true also of envy or anger or sloth. There is evermore need of watchfulness lest indolence or a complaining spirit lead us into slavery.

POINT III.—*The latter end is worse with them than the beginning.* After conversion to relapse into sin is a great peril. Yet as life advances how much danger there is lest we should be content to take a lower standard than formerly. How few keep up to the ideals of their early days ! Beware of being content with mediocrity.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make a fresh determination to keep free from sin.

DECEMBER 6.

Delay in our Lord's Coming.

READ 2 ST. PET. iii.

Where is the promise of His Coming?

PRELUDE I.—This is what the “scoffers” will say *in the last days*.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to look and to watch in patience for the Second Advent.

POINT I.—It should give us courage to know that St. Peter has actually told us that “scoffers” would rise up in the last days and say such things as, *Where is the promise of His Coming?* St. Peter points to the Flood. All things were going on in orderly course, yet at last *the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished!* So it will be again. He will come, though He seems to delay His coming.

POINT II.—*He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish.* Here is the secret of this apparent delay. He waits that He may be gracious. If God is patient in bearing with all the evils and sin of this world, who are we that we should be impatient? Pray for the conversion of sinners—that all may come to repentance.

POINT III.—*The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.* Whatever men may think, that will certainly be the end of this world and all it contains; they shall be *burnt up!* How ought we, then, to live on earth? Surely as men who *look for new heavens and a new earth.* What says conscience? Our Lord is coming, and how will He find us? Remember, *As it was in the days of Noe!*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Get into the habit of looking for Christ’s return.

DECEMBER 7.

Fellowship with God.

READ 1 ST. JOHN i.

We . . . show unto you that Eternal Life, Which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the mystery of the Word of God.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the supernatural joy of which St. John speaks.

POINT I.—*These things write I unto you, that your joy may be full.* The Revelation of the Word, or Thought, or Wisdom of God was a revelation of joy, for it raised men into fellowship with God and with His Eternal Son. How immersed we become in temporal solicitude when we ought to be raised above it all and holding secret intercourse in our spirits with God, Who has revealed Himself in Christ.

POINT II.—*If we walk in the light . . . we have fellowship one with another.* Our fellowship with God issues in fellowship with our brother men, just in proportion as we *walk in the light*. This world and its cares are for ever trying to prevent us *walking in the light*. Remember that this world, apart from God, is darkness.

POINT III.—*If we confess our sins.* This world is dark because of sin. We have peace and light in proportion as we separate ourselves from sin. We separate ourselves from sin by confessing our sins and by walking more and more *in the light*. Are you thus holding your heart and mind above the world in secret intercourse with God? If not, why?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Let your heart and will go out to God in acts of love.

DECEMBER 8.

A New Commandment.

READ 1 ST. JOHN ii. TO v. 15.

A new commandment I write unto you.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. John repeating in his last days, “ Little children, love one another.”

PRELUDE II.—Pray to fulfil this duty of brotherly love.

POINT I.—*I write no new commandment . . . but an old commandment.* It was an “ old ” commandment, for they had heard it from their conversion. It was, and is, the characteristic “ commandment ” of Christians that they must ever fall back upon to test themselves whether they were really followers of Christ. Am I really loving my neighbour as myself ? What says conscience ?

POINT II.—*A new commandment I write unto you.* Why new and yet old ? Because the old commandment is always making new demands upon our moral efforts. We have to rise up to fulfil aright this old commandment as it makes its claim upon us in a multiplicity of new ways. We can never have done with its fulfilment.

POINT III.—*He that hateth his brother, is in darkness.* We cannot say we are *in the light*, i.e. that we are truly God’s children, unless we are loving our brethren. Now let me ask my conscience, How far does this love of the brethren carry me ? How about the poor and outcast, the homeless, the heathen, the wayfaring men, the waifs and strays ? Missions ? My enemies ?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Expect this “ old commandment ” ever to be making new demands.

The World.

READ 1 ST. JOHN ii. TO v. 15.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the early Christian community in its antagonism to pagan society.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for unworldliness.

POINT I.—The “world” in St. John’s language is organized human society apart from God. The line of cleavage in the early ages was clear-cut and sharp. To come out and to be separate from the world, so far as might be, was the only safe line. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, were identified with human society as it then was.

POINT II.—Now, the spirit of the world has for ages eaten its way into the things of God. The world is christened, and more or less respectable. Separation from the “world” is, however, no less a duty than formerly, but it is much more difficult, for it is separation not so much from an external organization as from an internal spirit.

POINT III.—And yet, as Christians, we are pledged to fight against the “world” which at Baptism we renounced. Test yourself by your conscience. Do you find “worldliness” creeping into your life?—love of ease, applause, the praise of men, love of pleasure, pomps and vanities? Are you free from all this?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for an unworldly spirit. What would St. John say about your life?

DECEMBER 10.

The Devil.

READ 1 ST. JOHN iii. TO V. 16.

That He might destroy the works of the devil.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the reality of the existence of the Evil One.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that our Lord may destroy in you the “works of the devil.”

POINT I.—St. John’s teaching about Satan is very clear. *He that committeth sin is of the devil*, i.e. the real parent of sin is the Evil One. Do you wonder sometimes at the strength of evil within you? There is no cause for wonder; its explanation lies in the power of Satan, who *sinneth from the beginning*. Be watchful for his assaults.

POINT II.—The Apostle takes the hatred and envy to be found in the story of Cain and Abel as an example of the “devilish” spirit. Murder was the result, envy was the cause. Meditate on the deadly sin of envy—the evil eye which looks askance at the good of another. Do you make war on the first risings of this sin?

POINT III.—*That He might destroy the works of the devil.* Here was the cause of our Lord’s manifestation. Satan was beaten by the Second Adam, and He will beat him again in us if we co-operate manfully with His grace. But we must expect to have to fight hard and to fight to the last against spiritual sins of envy, anger, and pride.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Renew your loyalty to your Captain, Jesus Christ.

Self=sacrifice.

READ 1 ST. JOHN iii. 16 TO iv. 7.

We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

PRELUDE I.—Think of our Lord's love for us as manifested in His Atoning Sacrifice.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the spirit of self-sacrifice.

POINT I.—*He laid down His life for us.* In this, says St. John, we see our Lord's love for us. And we see more—we see in this a pattern for our guidance, that the true ideal of life is self-sacrifice. We are "our brother's keeper," and we must learn to act on this truth. It becomes a duty, then, to avoid *self-seeking* as a ground of action, and to aim at *self-sacrifice*.

POINT II.—*Whoso hath this world's good*, etc. We are not, for the most part, called upon to die for another, but we are called upon to give alms and to help others. If we fail in this we fail in a primary Christian duty. If possible a tenth of what we have should go to helping others. This is God's portion.

POINT III.—*If our heart condemn us.* Our conscience should be our guide in this matter. It should be the Voice of God to us, and so it will be if it is duly instructed. If our conscience condemn us, it is because God is greater than our conscience, and knoweth all things. Conscience condemning us is the echo of God's omniscient sentence upon us.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Think to-day of your duty in regard to almsgiving and assisting others.

DECEMBER 12.

Love.

READ 1 ST. JOHN iv. 7 TO END.

Love is of God.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the mystery of the Holy Trinity as the mystery of perfect love.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a heart of love towards God and man.

POINT I.—God's life is the perfect expression of love, and all pure love comes from God. *Love is of God*, and the more we really are children of God the more we shall love God and love one another. Think, then, of your love towards God. The lover seeks the object of his love : does your heart seek God ? Do you love to speak to God ?

POINT II.—*There is no fear in love.* But the fear of God often leads men to love God. First God's power is apprehended, and then His love in creation, in redemption, to us individuals. Almighty power cannot account for this world, but Almighty power and love can.

POINT III.—*He who loveth God loveth his brother also.* This is God's commandment. We cannot really love God and hate our brother, because man is the image of God. It is because we do not try to detect God's image in our neighbour that we so often take dislikes or indulge unkind thoughts of him. This shows that our love of God is not at all what it ought to be.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Make a resolution to act kindly to any whom you find it difficult to love.

Faith.

READ 1 ST. JOHN v.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the martyrs welcoming death.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more faith to *overcome the world*.

POINT I.—Faith is that which overcomes the world, *i.e.* which triumphs over everything that is opposed to God in this world—not intellect or culture or wealth, but *faith*. So Noah *condemned the world*, so Abraham, so the martyrs. Evil is very powerful, and we feel our helplessness; but faith triumphs over all difficulties, and rises superior to all outward circumstances.

POINT II.—This faith is a very complex thing, but think specially of this that it must be enthusiastic faith—a robust belief in the unseen, in the promises of God, in the merits of Jesus Christ, in the power which comes to us through His Sacraments. There must be in this faith a *desire to depart, and to be with Christ*.

POINT III.—And yet this faith must be very patient. It must not be daunted by reverses, it must not give way under difficulties, it must persevere. The martyrs seemed to fail: we must learn to bear with apparent failure, and this needs a very high degree of faith; but it *overcometh the world*.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Learn to be undaunted in difficulties, and to humbly rely on God's faithfulness.

DECEMBER 14.

Loyalty to Revealed Truth.

READ 2 ST. JOHN.

Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

PRELUDE I.—Think of St. John fleeing from the baths because Cerinthus the heresiarch was there.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for right judgment with regard to opponents and unbelievers.

POINT I.—Not to acknowledge that “Christ had come in the flesh” was to St. John a sign of Antichrist. One who denied this doctrine was not to be received into the Christian’s house. Towards such as wilfully deny the faith some attitude of disapproval is necessary. We must never let people suppose that we think it of no consequence whether they are Christians or not.

POINT II.—If God has spoken to men, it must be of paramount importance to know exactly what He has said. We cannot play fast and loose with revelation. *He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*¹ How lightly we value the precious heritage of the faith!

POINT III.—This bears on the Athanasian Creed. It does matter what God has said, and we cannot say, “This is the Catholic Faith, and you may believe it or not as you please.” Let us thank God for “His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,” and let us remember that such high privileges involve great responsibilities.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for a real desire to make true Christians of all with whom you have to do.

¹ 1 St. John v. 12.

Goodness.

READ 3 ST. JOHN.

He that doeth good is of God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. John the aged ending his letters with this practical lesson.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your religion may show itself in practical works of goodness.

POINT I.—If we should ever be tempted to think of St. John as giving too much emphasis to the dogmatic or the contemplative side of life, we have the remedy in these words—*He that doeth good is of God.* God does not ask for barren orthodoxy or for a dreamy contemplation of goodness, but for a holy and “good” life. This is the ultimate test. Have you done good in your life?

POINT II.—*He that doeth evil hath not seen God.* No man hath “seen” God; but St. John means that whoever doeth evil has not, so far as he deliberately does it, entered at all into the mind and heart of God. What God loves is goodness, what He hates is evil; and our moral nature is meant to reflect that of God.

POINT III.—Meditate on the *proportion* required in the true Christian character. Faith there must be, love there must be, hatred of the world there must be, gentleness and strength, contemplation and action, forbearance and yet loyalty to revealed truth. All these qualities are brought before us in St. John’s Epistles.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—See that you are striving after the attainment of a true Christian character.

DECEMBER 16.

The High Ideal.

READ ST. JUDE.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Early Christian community keeping itself separate from the heathen world.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for the Spirit which inspired the Early Church.

POINT I.—*Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.* We are to rest on the truths of the Christian Creed as a sure basis of life. This is the key to our philosophy of life—that we believe and rest on the truths to which we profess allegiance when we repeat the Creed. This is the only sure basis of life that God has indeed visited His people and brought a new *life* into the world.

POINT II.—*Praying in the Holy Ghost.* Prayer is the secret of the Christian's life, for it raises him above troubles and enables him to fix his heart and mind and will on God alone. This gift of prayerfulness can only come through the Holy Ghost. We want more devotion to the Holy Ghost to inspire us with the love of Eternity and of God.

POINT III.—*Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.* What we all need now, and what we shall all need in the Day of Judgment, is mercy. This thought should give us a humble spirit, content to be where God puts us. Think of the unworldliness of the first Christians and their love of and joy in God! How indifferent to outward circumstances!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to aim more consistently at acquiring a truly Christian temper of mind.

The Book of Revelation.

READ REV. i.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. John in the Isle of Patmos receiving this Revelation on the Lord's Day.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to understand rightly the mysteries of this Book.

POINT I.—One leading thought in the Apocalypse is the supreme importance of the Second Advent. *Things which must shortly come to pass.* The main thing to be looked for is the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Whatever be the significance of this or that vision, the seer means to impress upon the Church as a point of greatest moment the imminence of this great Event. *Behold, I come quickly.*

POINT II.—Another lesson which permeates this Book is that the catastrophes which come upon the nations or upon the Church are never accidental, but are always judgments of God which He sends as He pleases for correction. The famines, fires, pestilences, earthquakes, wars are His instruments.

POINT III.—Another lesson is that neither the Church nor the individual can attain to glory except through tribulation and suffering. So, in the life of the Church and of the individual, we must look out for suffering as a condition of future blessedness. The saints are those who have come out of *the tribulation, the great one.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Great reverence in reading this Book. Try to see God's Hand in political upheavings.

DECEMBER 18.

The Messages to the Churches.

READ REV. ii. 18 to iii. 7.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the Risen and Ascended Christ walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to discern the signs of the times and the present needs of the Church.

POINT I.—Each message begins with, *I know thy works*. This assurance of our Lord's knowledge of the state of His Church should give us courage. He knows the wants of His Church now, and the wants of each portion of it. So of ourselves He says, *I know thy works*. He knows if we are really working our best and with a view to His approval.

POINT II.—*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee.* Each message contains a rebuke. First He encourages, then He rebukes. Too often we rebuke with imperfect knowledge—we cannot say, *I know thy works*—and too harshly, without encouragement. Learn that every one needs encouragement, and rebuke with discrimination and gentleness.

POINT III.—*To him that overcometh.* Each message ends with a like clause. There is no reward save to him who overcomes. *He that shall endure to the end.*¹ Learn the need of persevering effort. To have begun well is not enough; and perseverance is a supernatural gift to be gained by prayer.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Look to your life and work, and amend what is amiss.

¹ St. Matt. xxiv. 13.

DECEMBER 19.

The Lamb of God.

READ REV. V.

In the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the vision of the Throne, the living creatures, the elders, and the Lamb.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to learn aright the power of gentleness.

POINT I.—Our Lord in this vision is proclaimed as a Lion—the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*¹—but (when St. John looks) He is revealed as a Lamb. He has *prevailed to open the book*, but how? By meekness; by the power of self-sacrifice. The Lamb as it had been “slaughtered,” i.e. sacrificed. To be men of real power we must learn self-sacrifice.

POINT II.—*Stood a Lamb as it had been slain.* He “stands” as the Great High Priest; He is slaughtered as the all-sufficient sacrifice. “He stands as life-giving; He is slain as reconciling.” Here is a mysterious combination of life and death. We live by dying—dying to the lower that we may live to the higher.

POINT III.—*Having seven horns and seven eyes.* The horn is the emblem of strength, the eye of knowledge; seven denotes perfection. The Lamb, then, is Almighty and Omniscient. Hence He is “worthy” of all worship and adoration as our Redeemer: so the “new song” (ver. 9) is a song of redemption, whereas the song of iv. 11 was the song of creation.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Love of the Atonement; desire for self-sacrifice.

¹ Gen. xlix. 9.

DECEMBER 20.

The Sealing of the Servants of God.

READ REV. vii.

I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the vision here described.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be among the number of the sealed.

POINT I.—First the Apostle sees the members of the Jewish Church sealed, then the Christian Church. The Jewish Church is national circumscribed—the 144,000 ; the Christian Church is world-wide and Catholic—*of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.* On each one, whether Jew or Gentile, who is found faithful the seal of God is impressed.

POINT II.—What is the seal but “the image of God renewed in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost? The likeness and the mind of Christ stamped upon the soul ; the inward reality of a saintly spirit wrought in us.” This sealing is evermore going on. Are you being sealed thus by grace and perseverance?

POINT III.—*These are they which came out of great tribulation.* It is only through suffering that we can attain. No cross, no crown. How are we bearing the trials of daily life? Expect your share of suffering, and unite yourself more closely to Him Who bore His Cross for you, and Who will hereafter lead you to *living fountains of waters.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire to live evermore doing God’s holy Will.

DECEMBER 21.

Absolution.

READ ST. JOHN XX. 19-24.

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate our Lord breathing on the Apostles and saying these words.

PRELUDE II.—Pray rightly to value and to use the gift of absolution.

POINT I.—Our Lord comes as the Reconciler between God and man. He has committed to His Church the “Word” or “ministry” of reconciliation, so that what He did once for all potentially by His Cross and Resurrection may be actually brought near and applied to every member of His Mystical Body. To be at one with, at peace with, God is what we all need.

POINT II.—If His work was to be carried on in the world there was need for this ministry of reconciliation. As sin continues so does the need of absolution continue, and so at Morning and Evening Prayer we are reminded that “God hath given power and commandment to His Ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins.”

POINT III.—Absolution is a release from the guilt and power of sin; it is a real cleansing of the truly contrite heart. But we need to remember that “fresh sins destroy penitence,” and that to be “absolved” without real and true purpose of amendment is to mock God. We must co-operate with Divine grace.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Examine yourself with respect to your penitence.

DECEMBER 22.

Incense.

READ REV. viii.

And there was given unto him much incense.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the vision described in the first four verses of this chapter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your worship of God may be acceptable.

POINT I.—We have here a glimpse of the worship of heaven. Such glimpses show us that symbolical acts of ritual cannot be unacceptable to God if they are offered with a pure heart. The “standing at the altar,” the mingling and offering of incense, involve the whole principle of ritual worship. Do the heart and mind and will accompany your acts of worship?

POINT II.—*Much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints.* Incense is not symbolical of prayer, for it is offered “with the prayers.” It is symbolical of that which alone makes prayer acceptable, viz. the merits of Christ. This is generally the meaning of incense in the Christian Church. Persons and places and things are “censed” with this thought of the merits of Christ.

POINT III.—This truth is foreshadowed in the Jewish use of incense. There was in the Old Dispensation an oblation of incense, and this typified atonement—as in the case of Aaron and the plague. The true atonement is made only through the merits of Christ.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Resolve to be more careful in your public worship, more truly reverent and thoughtful.

DECEMBER 23.

The Woman and the Dragon.

READ REV. xii.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun.

PRELUDE I.—Consider the conflict between the dragon and the woman and her child.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to fight bravely against the assaults of the Evil One.

POINT I.—The key to this vision is the primæval promise, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.*¹ The “Woman” here is sometimes the Blessed Virgin and sometimes the Church. The Woman brings forth the Man Child, *i.e.* Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, the Head of the Church. If the Incarnation had not taken place the Church could not exist.

POINT II.—*A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.* If this refers to the Virgin-Mother it need not surprise us, for what is all this external glory compared with the unspeakable dignity of bringing forth the Saviour? The birth of Christ and the beginning of the Church is represented as rousing Satan to fresh enmity and malignity (vers. 7-12).

POINT III.—*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.* The fight continues, and must needs continue till the end of time. In view of Christmas Day consider that He Who comes as the Prince of Peace must needs come as making war on all that is evil and base in the world.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Prepare for Christmas by fighting against sin.

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

DECEMBER 24.

The Song of the Redeemed.

READ REV. xv.

They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the company of the redeemed standing by the sea of glass.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that you may be among the number of the saved.

POINT I.—*The sea of glass mingled with fire.* This imagery of the fire-shot sea symbolizes God's mercy and His judgment. The sea is the unruffled sea of His mercy; the fire is the fire of His wrath. The redeemed have come through the tribulation of His chastisements, and are saved through the infinitude of His mercy.

POINT II.—*The song of Moses . . . and of the Lamb.* The reference is to the Exodus from Egypt, which is the Old Testament type of Redemption. The Lamb is the Paschal Lamb. So the Old and the New Testaments hang together. He Whose Birth we commemorate tomorrow is the true Paschal Lamb, by Whose Blood we are redeemed.

POINT III.—*For Thou only art Holy.* God alone is essentially Holy, and among the children of men only Jesus Christ, the Virgin-born, is wholly without sin. So we welcome the Babe of Bethlehem in the words addressed to Him in the "Gloria in Excelsis": *Thou only art Holy; Thou only art the Lord.*

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Prepare for Christmas by thinking of the Babe of Bethlehem as the Redeemer.

DECEMBER 25.

Christmas.

READ ST. LUKE ii. TO v. 15.

Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the scene in the rough stable.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more love of our Lord.

POINT I.—The stable, the manger, the Infant, Mary and Joseph! Here is the greatest event in human history! How wonderful are God's ways! When He came, this is how He came—born in a stable, cradled in a manger! Learn to hate all show and self-assertion, and to love what is humble and unobtrusive. This is the Christ-like spirit.

POINT II.—The shepherds! To whom does God first make known His arrival on earth? Not to the great ones, but to the lowly. He was born not at Rome or Athens, but in Bethlehem, so He makes Himself known first, not to Herod or Cæsar, but to poor men. Again, it is God's way. His Gospel is essentially a Gospel for the poor. Are you striving after real poverty of spirit? Do you love the poor?

POINT III.—*Glory to God in the Highest.* Glory to God and peace to men. The Divine Infant brings peace to the soul. Humanity makes a fresh start in Him. The work of re-creating mankind and bringing it back into union with God is now begun! We are sons of God because we are His brethren!

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Say the Collect for Christmas Day, and be thankful.

DECEMBER 26.

St. Stephen.

READ ACTS vi.

A man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate St. Stephen arraigned before the Sanhedrin.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a greater measure of faith.

POINT I.—The first Deacon was the first martyr. We know nothing of him except this story of his martyrdom, and that he was *full of faith and of the Holy Ghost*. Faith is a gift of God given in answer to prayer. Do you not often take your faith for granted? Instead of this, we should often bewail our lack of faith, and pray for its growth and increase.

POINT II.—*They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.* Faith brings wisdom, the wisdom which is from above. A child's faith often begets a wonderful insight into God's ways. If we had more faith we should take a simpler and more childlike view of God's dealings with us and with His Church. We should *speak with wisdom*, like Stephen.

POINT III.—*The face of an angel.* Faith gives courage as well as wisdom. The reason why we are so cowardly is often because we lack faith. The world's ways soon cloud the faculty of faith, and we are afraid of the opinion of others! If we really believe in the Christmas message of the Incarnation we *shall not fear what flesh can do unto us.*¹

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for the faith, wisdom, and courage of St. Stephen.

¹ See Ps. lvi. 4.

DECEMBER 27.

St. John.

READ REV. i.

I John, . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the vision of the Risen and Ascended Christ.

PRELUDE II.—Pray that your life may be lived to the greater glory of God.

POINT I.—The three days which immediately follow Christmas Day are meant to teach us the three “kinds of martyrdom.” St. Stephen was a martyr in act and desire; St. John was a martyr in desire only; the Holy Innocents were martyrs in act but not in desire, for they were unconscious. St. John—the longest-lived of all the Apostles—would bid us think of old age. So plan your life as if you were to live to old age, live it as if you might at any time die.

POINT II.—*Your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.* Notice the order of the words. Tribulation must come first and the kingdom afterwards. We do not look for a kingdom here. It is only if we *suffer with Him*. Expect your share of tribulation, and bear it with patience till the coming of the kingdom.

POINT III.—*I am the First and the Last.* *First*, because the origin and cause of all things; *Last*, because He is the goal to which all things tend, and at the last will be our Judge. He is *the living One, Who became dead* in order that He might have power, as Man, over death and Hades. The keys in His Hand are the pledge of this power.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—In life and in death, and after death, we are safe in His Hands.

DECEMBER 28.

Armageddon.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

READ REV. xvi.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the awful terrors described in this chapter.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for more watchfulness.

POINT I.—This chapter indicates that before the end of all things there will be a great mustering of forces—the armies of Satan arrayed against the armies of God. We seem to see something of this going on round about us now. The growth of evil seems to be more and more marked, while God's true servants grow more active and self-devoted. Are you vigorously, strenuously on the right side?

POINT II.—*Behold, I come as a thief.* Six times¹ is it said in Scripture that our Lord will come *as a thief*. When not expected, and when everything seems safe, He will come! As we draw towards the close of another year how careful should we be to prepare quietly for this great event of the Second Advent!

POINT III.—*Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.* The attitude in which we should wish to be found is one of watchfulness—ready to meet our Lord; and also one of carefulness, in order that we may be *without shame* when He appears. We should strive to be found doing the work He has given us to do and waiting for His call. What says conscience?

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Be not alarmed at the terrors which are round about you. Hold fast to Christ.

¹ St. Matt. xxiv. 43; St. Luke xii. 39; 2 Thess. v. 2; 2 St. Pet. iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15.

DECEMBER 29.

The Marriage of the Lamb.

READ REV. xix. TO v. 11.

Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the glories of heaven under this figure of a Marriage Supper.

PRELUDE II.—Pray to be among the blessed ones called to this Banquet.

POINT I.—The Union of Christ with His people is described here and elsewhere as a Marriage. The close ineffable union between Christ and His Church is shadowed forth in the mystery of Holy Marriage. The union of heart and will finds its true and highest counterpart in the mysterious union between Christ and His members. We are one with Him, and He is one with us.

POINT II.—This mysterious union of God with our human nature took place at the Incarnation, and was manifested in the Birth of the Divine Child on Christmas Day. Henceforth two natures—the human and the Divine—were indissolubly united in One Person. Our nature was gathered up into vital union with God.

POINT III.—What happened potentially on Christmas Day is made actual to each one of us at our Baptism, when we are made members of Christ, and the bonds of this union are drawn evermore closer together by Holy Communion. Here, indeed, we have a foretaste of that Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which, in God's mercy, may be our portion hereafter.

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Pray for more joy and refreshment and peace in your Communions.

DECEMBER 30.

The White Throne.

READ REV. XX.

I saw a great white throne.

PRELUDE I.—Contemplate the terrible scene of Judgment.

PRELUDE II.—Pray for a merciful judgment at the Last Day.

POINT I.—Heaven and earth flee away, but all the dead, small and great, stand before God! “Lo! the Book exactly worded!” Who can contemplate this scene without great searchings of heart? *If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?* Do we live enough in the realization of this great judgment? Alas, for our careless, thoughtless lives!

POINT II.—*The Book of life.* Our thoughts, words, and deeds are even now being registered. We are being judged every day, every hour! Are you trifling with conscience, nursing or at least allowing yourself some pet sin, putting off repentance, thinking it matters little so long as you confess your sin before you die? *God is not mocked.*

POINT III.—*This is the second death.* Some are condemned finally! Remember the surprises of the Day of Judgment! But remember, “as to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our Heavenly Father threw His Arms round each created spirit, and looked it full in the face with bright eyes of love, in the darkness of its mortal life, and that of its own deliberate will it would not have Him.”¹

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—In the Day of Judgment, Good Lord, deliver me.

¹ Faber.

DECEMBER 31.

The End of the Year.

READ REV. XXII. 6 TO END.

Behold, I come quickly.

PRELUDE I.—Reflect that to-day is the last day of the year.

PRELUDE II.—Pray really to desire the coming of Christ.

POINT I.—Three times in this chapter is the message repeated, *Behold, I come quickly*. It seems as if the great work of life is so to live that we may not only be prepared for Christ's coming, but be *longing* for it. *Let him that is athirst come*. There must be *desire*, not merely *acquiescence*. This involves real detachment of heart and will. Is your heart getting too much attached to anything this world can give?

POINT II.—*Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me*. What *reward* can we expect? Surely we shall be needing mercy in that day—the best of us will need mercy, and yet, *He comes to give to every man according as his work shall be*. There is encouragement here, for no work that we have honestly tried to do here, no word spoken, no act done, will go unrecognized! Oh that we might make the most of our opportunities!

POINT III.—*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come*. The Holy Spirit and the Church are longing for this consummation. The Bride desires evermore the coming of the Bridegroom. Every Christian soul which is truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit desires it. Beware lest you rest upon anything in this world for permanent support or comfort. Beware as the year draws to a close lest you be found “sleeping.”

AFFECTIONS AND WILL.—Desire, with a great desire, the coming of the Lord.

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